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HOMEWORK FOR JEWIS

Preparing For Jewish-Christian Dialogue

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PREFACE

What Jews Need to Know About Dialogue with Christians

American Jewish reaction to this age of dialogue has been mixed.

On the one hand, Jews have awaited with anticipation Church statements acknowledging the complicity of Christians in a sixteen hundred year oppressive pattern of history. They have hoped too for Christian acknowledgment of Judaism's ongoing preciousness as a distinctive religion. Thus, they have hailed every significant condemnation of anti-Semitism and responded to every genuine movement toward reconciliation.

On the other hand, agonizing delays in the promulgation of public declarations, the repetition by some esteemed Church leaders of anti-Semitic canards, veiled calls for Jewish conversion, the inadequacy of Church statements when at last they were issued, and, most recently, the apparent lack of concern among church bodies for the survival of the State of Israel during the tense days of Arab-Israeli conflict have soured the enthusiasm of some Jews for dialogue.

Despite this mixed reaction, many Jews remain deeply involved in the interreligious conversations. They participate in cooperative ventures to repair the world's damage. Some Jews, on principle, however, will not engage in theological talk—they believe it impossible for adherents of various religions to communicate the most essential convictions of their faith in a comprehensible fashion; they consider such dialogue, in any event, counterproductive. They suggest that theological conversation cannot be maintained in a spirit of fellowship; ultimately it causes harm to the minority group. Nevertheless, such Jews do join as citizens in cooperative programs of social welfare. Still other Jews—a distinct minority—fear Christianity and suspect the Church. They consider dialogue only a more sophisticated form of missionizing. Such Jews shelter themselves within the Jewish community.¹

This pamphlet, part of a series on interreligious dialogue, is a sincere effort by one rabbi, a participant at many major international church gatherings on Christian-Jewish relations, to raise crucial questions and point to provocative issues that concern Jews about the dialogue. Where the Church has been inadequate to Jewish expectations, it will not be spared. Where prejudice and fear within the Jewish community has contributed to the ecumenical frustration, it will not be overlooked. This pamphlet will try to explain to Jews those aspects of Christianity that account for Christian postures within the ecumenical movement. Hopefully this essay will be read by both Jews and Christians, thus contributing to interreligious conversation, perhaps providing helpful insights.

The Author's Bias

If the Jew hopes to ameliorate anti-Semitism, win support from Christians on issues of vital Jewish concern and enhance understanding, then dialogue between Jew and Christian is necessary. How can Christians comprehend Jewish feelings if there is no communication? In this regard the lasting value of the interreligious efforts, conducted by B'nai B'rith's Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, the Reform and Conservative Jewish movements, the Synagogue Council of America, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews, can be amply documented. Most recently the ongoing need for dialogue is evidenced by misunderstandings over the role of the State of Israel for the Jewish religion.

But the value of dialogue, however, is not alone defensive. Jews have much to learn from Christians. Jewish faith commitments can be enriched and strengthened through the dialogue. Jews ought to be in the dialogue, not to manipulate it, but to mature through it, and, though within it, to make a distinctive Jewish contribution to man's search for wholeness.

We Need Each Other

Both Jews and Christians face similar problems in our secularized, commercialized, technological society. We must rise to the challenges of our age: poverty, racism, war. We must somehow win back an alienated youth, many of whom despair of the future. We must re-evaluate our theologies, reconsider our ways of describing God's actions in history and reshape our liturgical celebrations.

We must be able to confess our inadequacies, articulate our anguish at human perversity, arouse that within us which makes for reconciliation. It is imperative that we find the ways to structure society so that justice may be achieved, human fulfillment and peace made possible. In such a momentous task, we need each other. We need the insights that each of us has nurtured. We need instruction from each other's mistakes. We need the reassurance that comes from encounter with other humans similarly committed to righteousness. Dialogue offers the hope that we can become a family of people in the service of the One God.

This booklet is one in a series intended to prepare and involve Jews and Christians in the dialogic process. The first booklet, *The Meaning and Conduct of Dialogue*, describes what dialogue is, what it is not, what it accomplishes, and how to set up dialogue groups. This should be consulted before launching any of the sessions. Another publication in the series is addressed primarily to Christians, (*Homework for Christians*), just as this one speaks primarily to Jews. Future booklets will be devoted to the perennial religious and historical questions which Jews and Christians might wish to explore jointly.

The following pages provide for five sessions, although the serious pursuit of the subject matter may require additional meetings.

SESSION ONE: Jewish Bitterness and the Jewish Response

Pages torn from the history books of western civilization have been the study-texts of Jewish children for generations. In fact, memorials to these sad events have been incorporated into the liturgy of the Jew. Many traditional worship services rehearse the anguish of Jews massacred in the Rhine Valley during the Crusades. The "Kol Nidre" oath taken by Marranos (Jews converted to Christianity during the Inquisition, who secretly linked their lives to Judaism at peril of the stake) still sends chills down the spines of Jews during the Yom Kippur service. Passover services frequently evoke memories of the Holocaust. And special ceremonies are conducted widely on the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The fate of the State of Israel provokes concern as Jews pray daily for the "rebuilding of Jerusalem." Most Jewish youth know about forced conversions, the burning of the Talmud, the heroism of Jewish martyrs.

Jewish children are taught that a Marrano was navigator on Columbus' voyage of discovery and that another Hebrew-speaking interpreter gave the "turkey" its name. The first Jews in America fled the Inquisition in Brazil in 1653. Haym Solomon helped finance the American Revolution. The second wave of Jewish immigrants, in the early 1820's, fled reaction in Germany where "Hep! Hep! Herosolaim est perdita!" (Jerusalem is destroyed) was the anti-Semitic slogan hurled at the harassed Jews. Most American Jews are descendants of victims of the Eastern European pogroms between 1880-1914. Czarist policy was inspired by Pobiedonostzeff's call to Russia to kill one-third of the Jews, convert one-third and chase out one-third. In fact, the founders of the modern State of Israel were those Russian Jews who chose as their refuge the wasteland, the malaria-ridden swamps of Palestine, instead of the "golden country"—America.

No wonder, then, that Jewish youth suffered cramps in their stomachs and were gripped with anxiety when they were required to

sing Christmas carols in the American public school or recite Christian prayers in morning devotionals. No wonder that adult Jews poured millions of dollars into the development of sophisticated, professional corps of Jewish "community relations" workers to fight anti-Semitism. A large number of hate groups sprouted in this land prior to World War II and were resurrected after the Supreme Court's desegregation decisions. My own youthful high school experiences, in addition to the usual urban ghetto fracas, included gang wars with American Nazi "brown-shirts" organized in my neighborhood, in Philadelphia, by the German-American Bund.

Regrettably, many Christians are unaware of all of this. They are blind to the history of anti-Semitism. All they know about Jews is that we were the people chosen by God to bring the Commandments to mankind. Although a stiff-necked, back-sliding people, it was from our loins that God sent the Messiah. Then allegedly out of blindness, hypocrisy or hardheartedness, Jews rejected Jesus. As a consequence, Jerusalem was destroyed, Jews were sent into exile nowhere to feel at home, our suffering a punishment for "deicide." As we shall see later, these convictions—a distortion of Christian teaching—were nevertheless held sincerely by many Christians; unfortunately, these distortions were believed by Jews to be the official Christian judgment.

Christians never could understand why Jews carried such a "chip on their shoulder" or were so sensitive; and Jews never could comprehend why Christians knew so little about their own involvement in civilization's most outrageous atrocities. Christians tried to convert us; and we considered them semi-converted pagans whose gospel of love was a lie.

Christians Re-evaluate Their Theology

After World War II, Christian scholars themselves asked: how was it possible that such brutality could occur within a Christian civilization? The answers to that question and the recognition of Christian failure to respond faithfully to many social problems, to overcome separatism and internecine strife, to achieve racial justice and make peace—all these inform the content of the new theology, the ecumenical revolution, the efforts at Jewish-Christian reconciliation, the development of varied forms of spiritual ministry, the re-emergence of the social gospel. "Revolution" is a word that well

describes what is happening within Christianity. We are in the midst of that revolution now.

Since World War II, as an aspect of Christian renewal, many major denomination and international convocations—The World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Vatican Council, the World Pentecostal Conference in Jerusalem, The World Evangelical Conference in Berlin, the Southern Baptist Convention, The United Methodist Church—have given central consideration to the problem of anti-Semitism. They have reassessed Christian teachings on the Jews.

A New Age Dawning

In truth, we are entering a new period in Jewish-Christian relations; and, even if in many ways Jews are dissatisfied, we need to know and appreciate what has happened in these years.

Anti-Semitism Condemned

Many major international and some denominational church bodies have condemned anti-Semitism. To some degree, these groups have acknowledged that past distorted interpretations of Christian texts have contributed toward the malice wreaked upon Jews. By resolution they have called upon their constituents to fight discrimination. They have acknowledged that the traditional view of an endless corporate Jewish guilt for the murder of Jesus is a reprehensible violation of authentic Gospel teaching. They have called upon their adherents to view the Jews in a new light and to enter into dialogue with us. There have been exceptions to this new reconciliation. These include some conservative churches, some Eastern Orthodox clergy and some rightists within the Catholic Church—all of whom nurture still a theological antagonism towards Judaism and Jews.

Most Churches have begun the difficult task of writing new textbooks, offering clarifying commentaries for harsh scriptural passages, proposing sermons that deal with anti-Semitism. Many Church-related schools have provided for in-service training of their teachers; they seek constructive materials that will help their students understand their Jewish neighbors. Rabbis have joined the faculties of more than eighty Church-related colleges and seminaries. Christian professors attend summer graduate institutes

where they study with Jewish scholars. Pilgrimages have been made to Israel by Church editors, educators and denominational officials.

Some of the Churches—and notably the Catholic Church—have established official departments within their hierarchal structure whose chief work is Christian-Jewish reconciliation. Christian personnel are now available to respond to crises in history affecting the Jewish people. Conferences on issues in Christian-Jewish relations are held everywhere throughout the country; and no longer do Jews need to be the sole initiators of such interfaith meetings.

In general, then, there has been a remarkable change in Jewish-Christian relations. Admittedly this overview is limited and somewhat euphoric. There are critical evaluations that can be made of all of these projects. For the moment, however, it would be well for both Jews and Christians to read, study and discuss the major statements on Jews and Judaism that have thus far been promulgated by international Church bodies. These are to be found in the *Appendix*.

Questions for Discussion:

First read and analyze the statements in the Appendix

1. What differences do you find in these statements?
2. Do you agree with the author that these resolutions reflect "a remarkable change in Jewish-Christian relations"? If so, what value do you see in such resolutions; if not, what do you think is required?
3. What efforts have been made by Christians whom you know to bring these teachings to the attention of their adherents? What efforts have Jewish organizations made to inform Jews of this Christian concern for anti-Semitism?
4. What must still be done to translate these sentiments into effective action?
5. Before getting any further into this text, what do you think now about Jewish-Christian dialogue? Do you think it can be helpful? In what way? Do you think it fraught with danger? Why? What motives had you, yourself, to participate in this project?

SESSION TWO: The Problem of Christian Missions to the Jews

Despite these constructive declarations of Christian opposition to anti-Semitism, many Jews, nevertheless, remain dissatisfied and suspicious. Of particular concern is the fear that many Jews hold that dialogue is a sophisticated form of Christian missionizing. Jews deeply resent any Christian missionary enterprises devoted toward their conversion; and a conversion goal is implicit in some of these statements. In addition, Jewish leaders have pointed out that most official Church statements, in no way, comment on the ongoing preciousness of Judaism. They do not support the right of Jews to survive as a unique and distinctive group. Thus they imply a Christian superiority.

Memories of forced conversions—the recollection of those occasions when the Jews were compelled to debate the right to their differences and then punished for their eloquence, the realization that in past history Jews were required, for example, at the elevation of a new pope to participate in ceremonies dramatizing the inferiority and insufficiency of Judaism—these have so angered some Jews that they would eschew participation in any interreligious dialogue.

The late beloved Augustine Cardinal Bea, architect of the Vatican Council's declaration on the Jews, when describing the Church's new approach, wrote: "The Jewish people are no longer the people of God in the sense of being the instrument of salvation for humanity." Admittedly Cardinal Bea later softened this judgment, but not in terms that Jews could easily understand or accept. He explains: The Jews have lost their status "not because they had been completely rejected as a punishment but simply because their function of preparing the Kingdom of God terminated with the coming of Jesus and with the foundation of the Church."² Jews will ask: Has the synagogue no longer any affirmative function in proclaiming God's Kingdom to the world? Is the Church now the sole instrument for salvation?

The Lutheran World Federation's Logumkloster Declaration, which included the most forceful of all Church statements in oppos-

ition to anti-Semitism, nevertheless affirmed also resolutions on missionary work which most Jews would consider equivocal. It urged Christian to "pray for the Jews daily" in that "Old" Israel remains outside the "New." "This division will be healed," said the Lutheran World Federation, "when 'all Israel' recognizes Jesus of Nazareth as its Messiah. Only then will the mystery of the faithfulness of God toward His People be resolved." The Declaration also affirmed "witness to the Jewish People" to be "inherent in the content of the Gospel." The Lutherans further resolved that when Jewish communities in the world "cannot normally be reached by Christian congregations mission organizations must provide for the proclamation of the Gospel to these people."³ Jews will ask: Why must the ultimate unity of mankind be achieved only through the recognition of Jesus as Messiah? Perhaps each of us can serve God in harmony, yet each according to his own traditions of faith.

Jews cannot easily accept the theses implicit within Cardinal Bea's assertions or the Lutheran World Federation's declarations. We cannot, on our part, affirm the hope that Jews will one day unite with the Church in recognizing Jesus as the Christ. We are not comfortable with missionary enterprises directed particularly at conversion of Jews to Christianity. The implied superiority of Christianity as God's instrument in human redemption is offensive to Jews. Jews affirm their capacity to be "a light to nations." The God who has preserved us, who has been precious to us, who is revealed through our history as trustworthy and faithful, that God we believe still speaks to the hearts of men through our corporate commitment to His way of justice and peace. Our fulfillment as a people does not require conversion to Jesus as the Christ, but it does envision a humanity united in the service of one God.

Jews Are Enemies To All Forms of Totalitarianism

It is not an accident that Jews are the enemies of right and left wing totalitarians, that we are denied freedom by Soviet Communism, that Israel today is in the center of the world's concern for international rapprochement, that Jews are maligned by Ku Klux Klanners and New Left terrorists alike. Somehow, in some way, the God of History has positioned us so that Jews as a people, although but a tiny part of the world's population, nonetheless remain of concern in the world's struggle for human reconciliation and peace.

Many Christians accept this fact as Scriptural truth: "Salvation is of the Jews." They are eager to be linked with Jews in dialogue, even if critical of many Jewish affirmations.

What Jews Need To Know About the Christian Mission

Jews must realize, on their part, that they ought not, today, judge Christian missionary enterprises on the basis of the memories of past impositions. Almost all Christians now eschew any coercion, manipulation or dishonesty in conversion work. They hold as reprehensible any effort to limit the freedom of conscience in matters of religious belief. Witness, for example, the massive Christian defense of Soviet Jewry.

For many Christians, however, the duty to proclaim that Jesus is the Christ is an inherent part of their Christianity. They are Christians because they believe that the Messiah already has appeared and that his redeeming return is assured. The very practice of their faith becomes a statement: There is a very special Christian way by which men may atone for their sins, become reconciled with God and their fellow men and assure a place in the life hereafter. The Christian is commanded by his Messiah to teach and instruct the world.

Jews, therefore, must hesitate before demanding of Christians that they give up that which many Christians feel to be an integral part of their own self-identification. We can, of course, voice questions as to the implications of Christian missionary work and we must urge a consideration of the methods that are used to proclaim the Gospel.

Many Christians affirm Christianity to be a uniquely redemptive faith, but they are quick to agree that the proclamation of Christian truth does not necessarily imply the superiority of Christians or Christianity.

The teaching of Amos which Jews apply to themselves—"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (3:2)—is similarly held by Christians. Chosenness does not imply superiority, rather it requires higher responsibility.

Just as many Jews hold themselves to be a unique people in God's favor, so do Christians. Both properly recognize, however, that this uniqueness does not preclude God's relationship with other peoples, His saving works among them, nor does it rescue the chosen people from God's punishment. "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the

Land of Egypt? And the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" (Amos 9:7)

Furthermore, Jews need to appreciate that when Christians feel themselves bound to proclaim the truth of Jesus, such proclamation is directed to all mankind. Exclusion of Jews from such proclamation has in the past been a form of anti-Semitism—"Jews are unworthy of salvation." Inclusion of Jews, on the other hand, offends us—since Jews hold themselves already in intimate relation to God, the Father, requiring, therefore, no Christian intercession, no conversion to Christianity to achieve redemption.

Jews cannot demand of Christians that they reject their duty to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah—just as many Jews would reject any Christian requirement that Jews abandon their particularity, their own sense of uniqueness in God's plan for history. As we shall see later there are Jews and Christians who do question this entire theological structure—that there is any one chosen people of God or one unique church of salvation. What Jews and Christians can do, properly, is to assure that missionary work be carried on with respect for the freedom of conscience and the dignity of the other person. We can affirm the religious truth that it is God—not man—who circumcizes the heart. It is required, therefore, not that Christian proclamation cease, but rather that a distinction be made between "proselytization" and "witness" or "missionizing" and "proclamation."

A Distinction Between Proselytization and Proclamation

Christians recognize the Christian proclamation to be an act of love. It is directed to all mankind, including themselves; it calls on man to be converted to higher ideals, to be truer to the divinity within himself, to become more humane. To exclude the Jew from such proclamation could be interpreted as an act of hostility toward Jews. The proclamation, in itself, is not offensive. It is the Christian's way of being.

Missionaries As Friends of Jews

In the early nineteenth century, some Christians thought of Jews as satanic, sub-human, a people not worthy of salvation. The Christian *pietists*, who insisted on missionary work among the Jews, were the precious few who realized that Christianity itself lacked

qualities it would regain only if Jews were numbered among the Christians. For centuries there had been Christians who neglected Old Testament studies, who contrasted uncritically the alleged hypocritical legalism of Judaism with the saving grace of Christianity. Yet there were always some Christians who had been nurtured in biblical Judaism and who recognized that the New Testament could be understood only within the context of rabbinical discourse. These Christians scholars of Hebrew and Talmud, these Christians who respected the emphasis of Hebrew Scriptures on man's humanity, on the need for corporate justice, on the inseparability of flesh and spirit and word and deed, on the obligation of man to find meaning in history—these Christians affirmed their love for Jews by “counting us in”; that is, they included Jews among the humans to whom the Gospel ought to be directed.

Among those who risked their lives to save the Jews from Hitler's death-machine were such Christian missionaries. They were concerned enough for Jews to hide them; they organized the chain of hostels that enabled some Jews to flee Europe. They did not abandon the Jews.

Significantly, now, many of these former missionaries live in Israel, or in Germany and Holland. Some have written eloquently the new radical theologies on Jewish-Christian relations—and some have abandoned missionary work altogether.

Christian Arguments Against the Proselytization of Jews:

Missionary work among Jews has been ineffective. Very few Jews willingly abandon their people. In the past, most conversions were brutally compelled. Christianity was either imposed on Jews; or the material conditions of Jewish survival were so treacherous that conversion to Christianity became the “passage-ticket” to “civilization.”

Now that all of us have failed so painfully in our efforts to tame man's bestiality, it ill behooves any one religion to claim an ethical or spiritual superiority. We share together our human anguish. Particularly in light of the acquiescence of some Christians to the outrageous murder of Jews, many theologians have cautioned their co-religionists to a silence in the presence of Jews. Not by button-collaring, tract-passing or contrived manipulation will or ought a Christian seek to convert today's Jews.

Some Christian theologians have called on the Church to re-evaluate its image and its role in the world and, as a result, to abandon specific missionary work altogether. It is helpful to understand what they have suggested:

- a) A review of past history makes it evident that Christians themselves have erred against each other and other religions. Even the most sainted Church leaders have been guilty at times of an unconscionable prejudice, even within their own community of faith. Some Christian leaders, therefore, have called upon their constituencies to confess themselves to be a sinning people. They must seek reconciliation through renewal of faith in the light of Jesus' command to love. They must acknowledge themselves as pilgrim people—on the way to the promised land, but not yet perfected in faith, nor without blemish. As a historic fact, churches with gross political power in church-state alliances were more guilty of oppression than free churches who abandoned the side of state-power and were themselves victims.
- b) The Church must eschew every form of coercion, violence or manipulation. Its power ought not derive from political muscle or alliance with the State, nor from the contrived manipulation of human need. The Church's pronouncement to the world, its dignity and its power, lies alone in the life account of Jesus who sacrificially loved humanity and offered man the choice: either to live life by greed, lust and war or by principles of justice, human service and love. One path is the road to hell, the other to life eternal. The Church need only demand the freedom to proclaim this word. The word itself has power.
- c) The word must become incarnate in the life of persons and community. God's grace is reflected in lives lived righteously, in the tenderness of one's humanity, in the vigor with which the corporate community eliminates racism and poverty and pursues peace. The Church ought not seek to conquer the world, nor to rule it, but rather to serve it. By the example of their lives Christians can witness to the Truth that they have nurtured, cherished and encountered. Not proselytization but witness is the prescribed mis-

sionary method. Conversion, when it occurs, is the work of God's spirit within a free conscience.

- d) Finally, some churchmen have acknowledged that there is an experience of God's presence available within all major religions. There will never be a uniformity among men. Pluralism is the human condition. Indeed, since each of us is delimited by our human inadequacies and historic experience, no religious group can embody all of God's truth. We are required, therefore, to engage in dialogue with each other. Witnessing to our own conceptions of the truth, we must also listen to the other. Through such encounter, we may be instructed, even edified.

Dialogue Requires the Abandonment of Missionary Manipulation

The arguments here outlined have led an increasing number of Christians to affirm that an experience of God is nurtured among Jews and that Jews can speak tellingly to man's predicament. Christians are required, therefore, to listen to Jews and to learn from them. They must not intrude missionary manipulation upon the dialogic encounter. The following are representative quotations from a variety of such Christian leaders:

At the Lutheran World Federation Consultation at Logumkloster, the German theologian, Gunther Harder, made a sincere effort to help his co-religionists recognize a divine purpose in Jewish particularity. He said: "The Christian community must respect the Jew's decision not to recognize Jesus as the Messiah as a special way of divine decision . . . If the Jews—precisely those Jews who do not acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah—continue to be God's People, then their religion is also the worship of the living and true God. We Christians must admit at the outset that this partner in conversation knows the same living and true God to whose service and worship we of the goyim are also called . . .

"If it is the intention to make a Christian of the partner in conversation, then conversation is indeed mission. But perhaps today—under no small number of instances—it will be the task of the Christian to call the Jew really to be a Jew and to remain a Jew and thus to stand in the place where God's wisdom and patience has placed him . . . There can be no missionary intention on the Christian side in the Christian-Jewish conversation. It will always be the

case for the Christian that he sees the Jew oriented toward and dependent upon God's gracious future. As to the way in which men will realize that future, the Christian will leave to the counsel of God."⁴

Billy Graham, the noted Baptist evangelist, in conversations with the author which he allowed to be published, repudiated a view articulated at the World Evangelical Congress in Berlin that, without Jesus, the Jew is lost. Said Dr. Graham: "... God, in His own time and way, will judge all men by the light according to which they live. We must distinguish him who lives by no revelation from one who knows that God is revealed in nature, in the world, and in history. The believing Jew's whole approach to life is testimony to his faithfulness to the God of his fathers. Christians must respect such devotedness to God."⁵

Billy Graham further revealed that in his own crusades he makes no special missionary appeal for Jewish conversion. Regarding New Testament teachings on the Jews, Dr. Graham explained: "The Jews are not a people rejected of God... we Christians must acknowledge that through our faith in Christ we are grafted on to the Jewish people, and we share *with them* the blessings of God. It is not that we displace the Jews, or that Jews are rejected or accursed... the Jews with whom we are now engrafted are not only those Jews who accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, but also those Jews who still await the Messiah's first coming..."

At the Vatican Council the issue of a missionary call to the Jews was openly debated. The American hierarchy and others decisively fought against such a statement. Said Archbishop O'Boyle of Washington, D. C. in the name of most American bishops: "Any reference to an ultimate joining together of Jews and Christians must be omitted, for it brings to the minds of Jews the memories of past persecutions, forced conversions and forced rejections of their faith."

Archbishop John Heenan of Westminster, England, pointed out that "The question of conversion, whether of individuals or of whole communities, has no place in the context of ecumenism. The object of ecumenism is not the conversion of either non-Catholics or of non-Christians. Ecumenism sets out to break down barriers between religious denominations in order that each may come to know and better understand the other. Ecumenism is an exercise, not in

polemics, but in charity. Its intention is not for one side to score a victory, but for each side to emerge with a deeper understanding of the other."

As noted in the excerpts in the *Appendix*, the American Catholic Bishops Committee on Catholic Jewish Relations has officially endorsed this approach to dialogue: "It is understood that proselytizing is to be carefully avoided in the dialogue; Catholic teaching should incorporate an acknowledgment by Catholic scholars of the living and complex reality of Judaism after Christ and the permanent election of Israel."⁶

Fr. Cornelius Rijk, director of Catholic-Jewish Relations for the Secretariat for Christian Unity in the Vatican, has similarly articulated such a view:

"Israel (meaning the Jewish people) has its own authenticity and identity which it preserves and this it does according to the plan of God whose gifts are without repentance and whose call is irrevocable . . . Israel has a concrete, complex and religious reality outside the Christian order, has its own function in the plan of divine salvation . . . In true fidelity to its vocation and election Israel will survive.

"Conversion is necessary for both Jews and Christians. It means the conversion of the heart to the Lord to obey His Commandments more faithfully. It does not mean changing from one religion to another, but discovering more clearly God's plan of salvation, and following the ways of his providence. The teaching about conversion is certainly very much needed by Christians; particularly in their attitude and behavior towards Jews is radical conversion needed. In such attitude of sincere conversion and real penance, we will, perhaps, receive the grace of discovering the mystery of Israel and its relation to the Church."

Further quoting another Catholic scholar, Father Rijk added: "For the next one hundred years, Christians must be silent in their contact with Jews, and just listen and learn."⁷

At the Vatican Council, Catholic Bishop Blomjous of Tanganyika in East Africa sought to place the missionary issue within the larger scope of the Catholic Church's relation to the whole world. He asserted: "We used to think that the Church was sent into the world to gain the adherence of all men to Christ and her missionary effort was destined to convert all men to live as brothers in a single church . . . Today, however, we are faced with the realization that pluralism, and specifically

religious pluralism, is established in most parts of the world and that the forces of history will eventually make it a universal phenomenon . . . It seems that religious pluralism is part of God's plan . . . We are forced to ask ourselves the serious question . . . What is God attempting to tell us through the multiplicity of religion?"⁸

The Dialogue and Mixed Marriage

One of the arguments offered against interreligious dialogue derives from the fear that the atmosphere of cordiality that ecumenism stimulates will contribute to the growth of intermarriage and result in a further weakening of Jewish distinctiveness. Thus, the revered leader of America's Hasidic community, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Schneerson, has warned:

"Unfortunately, the concept of brotherhood has been misconstrued to require members of one faith to explain their religious beliefs and practices to members of another faith and in return receive instructions in the religion of others . . . These interfaith activities have at best added to the confusion . . . The alarming rate of intermarriage has a variety of underlying causes but there can be no doubt that one of the factors is the interfaith movement of dialogue."⁹

This view has been challenged outright by many other Jewish leaders. Representative is the dean of America's Reform Rabbis, Abraham Feldman of Hartford, Connecticut:

"Judaism is not a hothouse plant. It can stand exposure to the light of intellectual examination. It does a Jew no harm to know wherein his neighbor differs from him and it does his neighbor no harm to know why and wherein the Jew believes and practices differently. That way lies an appreciation of and the implementation of the right to be different as well as the possibility of the protection of that right and the freedom of religious belief based on intelligent courtesy and understanding."¹⁰

Although I agree with Rabbi Feldman that our security in a democratic society requires interreligious understanding, the truth remains also that in an open society there is a greater likelihood of mixed marriages and conversions. Despite the cautions uttered by all religious leaders, our young people meet ever more frequently across religious lines. They fall in love. The rate of mixed marriages increases, conversions from one faith to another take place in ever increasing percentage.

If it is some consolation to Jews, I recall that social statistics

demonstrate that young Jews tend to remain loyal; they date less across religious lines; they are less apt to enter mixed marriages and they convert less frequently to another faith than do Protestants and Catholics.

Indeed, Jews have established centers for religious instruction in the major urban cities and several thousands of Christians convert annually to Judaism, ninety-five per cent of whom convert in the context of a marriage to a Jew.

In an open society we must allow for mixed marriages, and since all clergy are convinced that it is better for the members of a family to share one faith, all religions need to prepare for the adequate training and nurture of converts.

There is much we need to learn. Exactly how many mixed marriages are there, what factors contribute to conversion to one religion as against another, what is the most intelligent way to receive a convert, what effect does conversion have on the family's participation in the faith-community, how does mixed marriage, with or without conversion, influence the religious practices and group identification of the children of such marriages?

Social scientists are just beginning to gather such data and acquire the answers to such questions. All religious groups are confronted with the same problem—indeed this is one issue we ought to share together in the interreligious conversation.

There is some data to suggest—for a wide variety of reasons, such as the economic and social standing of Jews, the intellectual ferment in our community, Jewish alienation from the mainstream culture, Jewish political liberalism, Jewish religious-humanism, and the like—that Jews are more than holding their own in the rate of exchange between religions caused by mixed marriage.

But competition for a larger number of converts is truly not the issue. Ultimately all religions must either choose to live in an open society and find the ways to handle the consequences of pluralism, or opt for self-ghettoization. I am sure, even if it were the path chosen, that Jews any longer have the social and psychological power to maintain a self-imposed ghetto, aside from the drastic political consequences of such a policy.

Not Ghetto Walls—But Dialogue—Protects The Faith

The problem confronting both Jews and Christians is to make our religions so vital, so meaningful to life, so important in the repair of the

world, so exciting and fulfilling that our children will want to remain within our ranks. In my experience, interreligious dialogue has not weakened faith. Rather it has enriched it. Most young people are challenged by the dialogue to plunge deeper into their own traditions. We shall protect the future of our religions, not by building higher and ever higher the ghetto walls, but rather by confronting the world in faith and confidence. By our readiness to serve the world and to make it holy, we strengthen loyalty to religion. Ghettoization, whether chosen or imposed on a group, shrinks the soul and distorts the spirit.

Obviously I am a committed Jew. I want the Jews to survive. I hope Christians will acknowledge that my Judaism is more than adequate to make of me a good man, a man of justice and peace. I trust that Christians will respect the fact that my Judaism has nurtured values essential to mankind's future. On the other hand, I cannot argue a priori that Judaism is superior to Christianity or that Jews are a people superior to Christians. This is not the case. All of us are called to serve mankind. All of us have been inadequate.

I know Christians and non-Christians who are models of virtue, whose lives have inspired Jews—Reinhold Niebuhr, Billy Graham, Martin Luther King, Jr., Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Ghandi, Pope John XXIII. These are but a few of the modern day religiously-committed persons through whose lives I myself have been enriched. Every Jew has his own list.

Openness to the goodness within the humanity of each of us is my own path to mystic at-one-ment and human fellowship. I do not fear mixed marriage although I do not favor it. Certainly I would not oppose dialogue on that account.

There Is No Precondition to Dialogue

Dialogue is so crucial to human self-understanding and to corporate well-being that I am not certain that I would set *any* preconditions to dialogue. No matter how the other may differ with me, given the opportunity, I would consider it my duty to speak to him, to inform him, to touch his heart, to listen to him.

It is my view that God is best known through our relations with other human beings. We cannot achieve shalom (wholeness) in our world if we are not prepared to hear the word of God that may speak to us through the life of the other. Indeed, I believe that God's presence may be experienced most strikingly at the boundary lines,

where we are challenged by difference, opposition and alternative. It is then that we can know, in a profounder way, who we are and from what rock we are hewn. There ought be no no precondition to dialogue.

I confess, of course, that not all dialogue will succeed, particularly when one party would manipulate, intimidate, use physical violence or power against me and so attack my humanity. Then and then only must I defend myself and withdraw from the discourse—saddened that I had not found the way to evoke that which is of God in the life of the other. The respect that Jews and Christians hold for each other at this point in history bodes well for the dialogue.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why would some Jews object to missionary enterprises directed specifically at the conversion of Jews?
2. How do you understand the idea that “salvation is of the Jews”?
3. Do you agree with the distinction that is made between missionary work and proclamation of belief, or between proselytization and witness? What is the difference?
4. In what ways were missionaries once distinguished as friends of Jews?
5. What factors have led some Christians to abandon missionary work altogether? What alternative suggestion do they offer the Church in order that Christians may fulfill their role in history?
6. Do you agree that no religious group can embody all of God’s truth? In this connection, do you believe Jews are a chosen people; if so, how, then, do you account for Christians?
7. Do you think that dialogue encourages mixed marriage? If so, then what should be done about it?
8. Are there any Christians you know who have been an inspiration in your life?
9. Do you agree that there should be no precondition to dialogue excepting for those cases where physical violence or power is used?

10. Do you agree with the author that "The respect Jews and Christians hold for each other, at this point in history, bodes well for the dialogue"?

SESSION THREE: The Value of Differences

In an earlier period of American history Jews found it essential to emphasize those human qualities we shared with all others. This tack helped bridge the barriers erected during the sad past of Christian-Jewish conflict. Today, given the security of American democracy, we are ready to expose our particularities and we seek acceptance for ourselves in our wholeness. This new age of dialogue allows each of our religious groups to explore with the other those differences that are particularly unique, many of which have occasioned intergroup tension. It is exactly this new confidence that we celebrate in the interreligious exchange. It is valuable to review this development in interfaith conversation, particularly within the history of the National Conference of Christians and Jews—for the history of this organization mirrors well the problems and the advances in Jewish-Christian relations.

In its early history, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, prior to World War II, responded vigorously to the anti-Catholicism manifest in the Al Smith campaign and to the growing threat of anti-Semitic Nazism. A concerted effort was made by religious leaders to demonstrate the humanity we shared together. "Trios"—a team of priest, minister and rabbi—toured schools and churches. Americans were instructed that brotherhood across religious lines was indeed possible. Clergy and lay leaders of religious groups, that had long been antagonistic to each other, sought reconciliation by asserting a common faith in God's fatherhood. Such an approach—brotherhood in general—was the required method of *that* period in history.

The strength of American democracy was then tested by World War II. Through that baptism of blood, we emerged as a people genuinely more open to interreligious discourse. We endured anguish, however, when we realized that although a new ecumenical spirit had followed upon the trials of the war, Americans of all religions had nevertheless remained terribly negligent and grossly

inadequate in their response to the poverty in our midst and to the racism rampant in White society. Much of the content of today's interreligious endeavors exactly concerns such social problems.

We realized, too, that brotherhood cannot easily be maintained when genuine differences are overlooked. Not only do we differ on political, social and economic issues—often as a consequence of our religious and cultural values—but, in addition, it is apparent that human reconciliation can take place only when we are capable of authenticating the personhood, the uniqueness, the individuality of the other.

“Brotherhood in general” is an amorphous condition. Differences ought not to be repressed, our particularities need not be smoothed away. Rather we must discover how to live with each other despite our differences—and in most cases, we shall find our pluralistic community enriched because of the divergence and variety among the participants.

Honest acknowledgment of the discontinuities between historic groups, forthright affirmation of our unique qualities, reasoned conflict as we seek differently to shape the public order, can lead to a deeper and profounder sense of brotherhood. We have known the other in his fullest dimensions and we have allowed for him. Together we seek the way to make democracy—community with diversity—work.

Conflict Over the Role of Religion in the Public Order.

The struggle for religious freedom in America is in itself a demonstration of this profounder truth: Religious liberty was not a gift of the Founding Fathers. It had to be fought for; regrettably, American history recounts discrimination, persecution, rioting, bloodshed, as the price paid for every significant step forward.

In the earliest stages of American history Protestants persecuted each other. Baptists and Quakers particularly suffered the brunt of the early church-state establishments. Even after disestablishment, Mormons endured persecution as the civil order imposed the religious morality of the majority upon this minority group; so Mormons were driven from state to state. Then Protestant nativists brutally attacked Catholic immigrants. At yet a later period in our national development toward pluralism, “patriots” harassed Jehovah Witnesses. Anti-Semitism emerged. And, today,

we quarrel over the demands on the status quo made by non-Christians, Jews, Ethical Culturists, Atheists. Such issues as prayer and Bible-reading in the public schools, the use of public funds in support of children attending Church-related schools and Yeshivot, censorship, blue laws, birth control, divorce and abortion legislation, conscientious objection to war, have exercised the emotions of our religious groups and still do.

Fortunately, in the earlier period of American history, even as in this day, there emerged religious leaders whose respect for the freedom of conscience and the integrity of another man's convictions led them to fight against prejudice; they wrote the editorials, delivered the sermons, rendered the judicial decisions that enabled our nation to expand its concept of freedom. We have learned that individual and group differences must be permitted so long as these differences do not jeopardize the very existence of the State.

On many controversial issues, our differences derive from our religious and theological convictions. For example, Jews, Protestants and Catholics, who ascribe life to a foetus at different stages in its development, undoubtedly differ on the morality of abortion.

On the other hand, some of our differences are sociological or political. They reflect the consequence of our different histories or social and economic positions in American society and have little to do with theology.

Protestant Influence on America

Protestants, understandably, as the first major immigrant group to America and the majority religious group, have shaped the ethos of this country. Properly, they have struggled with the relation of religion to education. In the American system, it is clear that Church structures may neither be supported nor harmed by direct State action. On the other hand, religious values have always been inextricably intertwined with character education in American schools. Understandably, a vague kind of protestantized religiosity has been part of the American political value system. Catholics in their time bristled at Protestant impositions. With the assimilation of Catholics into the broad culture, it remained for non-Christians to challenge vestiges of Christian rite and symbol in secular public education and in the corporate political life. Undoubtedly, the

Jewish position on these questions is to some degree defensive in nature. Vis-a-vis the Christian world Jews still feel themselves a distinct minority.

Jewish Influence on Israel

In Israel, where Jews are the majority of the population, the same kinds of issues have arisen. The problems have been resolved no more effectively. Every society must decide its reaction to religion, religious institutions and minority religions. And, paradoxically, Jews in Israel offer different answers than Jews in America. In Israel, Jews require Bible instruction as part of secular education. Emphases in "Jewish consciousness" are offered Jewish students in the secular schools. The government provides financial support for Synagogue-controlled and Church-related schools. The State even purchases the Christmas trees for Christian schools. Censorship is imposed upon movies and theatres that violate Jewish religious and moral sensibilities. Certain restrictive Sabbath laws undoubtedly work a hardship on non-Jews, even as non-observant Jews bristle at these laws. The holiday spirit of Jewish festivals pervades the land so fully as to create problems for Christian and Islamic parents, not unlike those that Jews have encountered in America. Minority group children naturally gravitate toward the culture-models of the predominant population. And Jews, themselves, quarrel over the power of the rabbinate who decide issues of personal status on the basis of traditional Jewish laws.

The Project, Religious Freedom and Public Affairs

With the end of World War II, the National Conference of Christians and Jews adapted its program to the new realities in interreligious relations. It was no longer sufficient to preach brotherhood "in general." We had to take a hard look at our real or acquired differences and find the ways to respect them or to change our attitudes where possible. Where faith was at stake, we had to learn how to disagree more agreeably. The project, Religious Freedom and Public Affairs, was inaugurated. It encouraged clergy and laity, for the first time in America, to discuss openly and frankly those issues in the public arena about which we quarrel and harbor resentment. Interreligious dialogue groups were organized in 65 cities across the land.

Some truths emerged from this historic and pioneer program:

- a) There are very few issues on which our religions are divided unanimously. In each religious group, there are multiple reactions—many who support the officially-declared Church policy and some who oppose it. No one group can be characterized or stereotyped in one fixed image.
- b) There are no conspiratorial religious groups who would seek to destroy American freedom or deny rights of conscience to others. All of us are committed to a vital America where men may live in dignity and freedom.
- c) Some of our differences are irreconcilable. But we all agree that coercion, political maneuvering behind the scenes, intimidation, name-calling, violence—these breed mistrust and hostility. The public order cannot long endure such strain. Religious groups particularly have a responsibility, in relation to each other and within the public order, to assure peaceful social change. If we seek to understand the other's position, even when we disagree with him, then we nevertheless authenticate his humanity; that makes community possible.
- d) We discovered that when we talked out our differences, the nature of the quarrel changed. Distortions and misconceptions were corrected. The conversation frequently resulted in a revising of attitudes. It is clear today, for example, that many Churches will no longer seek to have the State legislate as "crime" that which is a sectarian conception of "sin." Many have realized that religious freedom, after all, may not be jeopardized if ways are found to support and enhance the quality of the secular education within Church-related schools. Many Christians have discovered that the morality and the character of public school children is hardly dependent upon the rote recitation of prayer—the situation is more complex; but rather, a more sophisticated examination of the curriculum's treatment of religion in the American heritage is certainly required. Jews along with Blacks have urged public school educators to teach more effectively about the role of our peoples in history. Particularly Jews would urge Americans to ex-

amine those sociological, economic and political forces that explain the brutalities of the past and sustain the anti-Semitism still to be found in our civilization. Black Americans—by their recent assertions that “Black is beautiful” and their thrust for dignity and justice—have taught Americans important lessons about ethnicity and justice that we had almost forgotten in our “melting-pot” mentality.

History As the Interaction of Historic Groups

History is the account of the interaction of historic groups. Every individual comes to the wholeness of his personhood through his relations with others. The achievement of justice requires involvement in the establishment of righteous corporate structures. Peace will be the blessing we experience when religious, racial, ethnic, social and political groups learn how to handle their conflicts and differences without violence.

Jews Are a Unique People—So are Christians

Jews believe that they are a unique and distinct people. We have been privileged, both through the inspired teachings of our most creative leaders and through our corporate suffering and survival, to have made a peculiarly important contribution to the spiritual values cherished by men. In our religion, we recall those great moments when our people experienced God’s presence in history.

Among the social-political insights celebrated by Judaism are the following: The right of man to freedom is communicated in the Exodus account. The duty of man to achieve righteousness through the law is affirmed at Pentecost. The obligation to create social and economic structures that provide men the basic sustenance of life is a message of Sukkoth. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we assert that no man need be condemned eternally by his inadequacy and sinfulness; life may be justified through repentance, atonement and a renewed commitment to human dignity. The Sabbath is a foretaste of the Kingdom of God: it is a sign of the peace that man has the capacity to achieve were he to tap the spiritual life within. Obviously, we think being Jewish is beautiful.

But if God is universal and cosmic, then it is no accident at all that every major religious, national and racial group should experience similar spiritual insights in the course of their history. All men struggle with the problems of war and peace, economic distribution, majority-minority relations, individual dignity and corporate responsibility. Christianity and Islam, with their roots in Hebrew Scripture, undoubtedly share many of these values affirmed in Judaism. There are continuities between Jews and Christians, even as certain Christian affirmations regarding the Messiahship of Jesus and the unique role of the Church as the New Israel are sharp discontinuities with Judaism. A schism erupted within the People of God when the synagogue and church separated; and, for too long now, Jews and Christians have been tragically antagonistic toward each other.

Jewish-Christian rapprochement must take into account these sharp and painful differences. But, as well, we must affirm that which we hold together. Peace cannot, should not, be made by obliterating differences. Since God is revealed to each of us according to our strength, in terms of our own unique historic experiences, we must first affirm our own truth. Then we are obliged also to learn from each other.

Christianity's Contribution to Civilization

Undoubtedly, Christianity spoke tellingly and critically, in the First Century, to a kind of Jewish exclusivity. It brought the values of Hebrew Scripture to a gentile world, hungry for the redeeming message of the One God. In affirming the incarnation of God in Jesus, Christianity offered hope for the Kingdom to a world overwhelmed with despair. Through the account of the crucifixion and resurrection, Christianity taught men: human service and self-sacrifice, the proper use of the goods of this earth, and above all, love—all of these are redeeming concepts. A life linked to such ideals overcomes death and achieves immortality. By rebirth in faith and through God's grace, a man may find the spiritual resources with which to overcome his sinfulness and use himself for good.

Judaism's Unique Qualities

Judaism, in its "stiff-neckedness," in its insistence on its own particular integrity, on a corporate life base on law, on the unity of

body and soul, on the need for social justice here and now, similarly affirmed values that are still crucial to human survival. Judaism insisted that universalism could be achieved only through the particular, that faith without works is hollow, that ethics in order to be real had to be translated into law, that God was to be known not only through reason, philosophy and formalized creed, but more significantly through the commitment of a man's whole life to righteousness and by the spiritual meaning he discovered in historic events.

Similarities Between Judaism and Christianity

A long-range view of history makes it apparent that each group has struggled with all of these human problems; and in different periods, each group, for its own reasons, has offered both different answers and the same answers. Both Judaism and Christianity have numbered among their adherents groups who emphasized the joy of life in the next world over the pain of this world; or repressed the flesh as a means to holiness; or sought to discipline life under a rather rigid and authoritarian legalism. Each group has provided a sheltered ghetto for its adherents from the temptations of the secular world. Each has, at times, defined itself in exclusive terms as the one, chosen people of God.

On the other hand, each in its own way has experienced revolutionary breakthrough moments when social concern, the redemption of this world, the joy of the flesh and celebration, involvement in the secular world, or the mystic transformation of normative legal codes have been characteristic. Each has defined itself, at times, in inclusive terms, opening the group to the insights of other peoples; each has counted the virtuous among the nations as residents of the Kingdom.

There are very few differences between Judaism and Christianity that would stand the test of time for *all* Jews or *all* Christians at *all* times in history. Although it is true that in a fundamental way certain differences have become normative and characteristic. Regretfully, this is not how we have been taught about each other. Usually the other group is denigrated and characterized in stereotyped imagery; the highest virtues in our own religious history are compared to the worst traits of the others. Christians have frequently contrasted a Judaism of harsh legalism to their Master's

teachings of love; Judaism is characterized as a hypocritical, inadequate effort by man to overcome sin by his own works and Christianity as the source of God's grace enabling man to be reborn in faith. Jews frequently contrast a Christianity of individual salvation with Hebraic teachings of social responsibility; Christianity's miracle system is characterized as superstition, whereas Judaism is presented as a religion of reason and rationality. Such teachings are a heritage of a past era of prejudice and polemic.

If the Torah is law it is also an instrument of God's grace. If Judaism emphasizes corporate responsibility it also judges social institutions by their effect on the quality of an individual's life; and no man is freed from the duty to shape his own life by the exercise of his will and faith. If Hebrew Scriptures describe God as "jealous," we are also constantly aware of his loving kindness. If Judaism emphasizes knowledge, learning and reason, our constituency also includes mystics who serve God with inward joy and ecstasy.

If Christianity seems to highlight individual salvation, it also includes a concept of the Corporate Body of Christ and the individual's responsibility to all of mankind. If Christians affirm a creed that includes concepts of immaculate conception, virgin birth, God in three persons, original sin, the Messiahship of Jesus, bodily resurrection—so, too, contemporary Christian theologians struggle over these dogmas in an effort to redefine them and understand them afresh. There is no one clear Christian teaching on any of these crucial theological affirmations. If Christians emphasize love as the central ethical principle, so too Christian teachers struggle with those absolute standards by which love can become justice. And history records the legalisms of many church bodies.

How then shall we describe that which makes us different? How contrast Judaism and Christianity? What are the differences that have become normative?

I believe that we must begin with history and sociology. Research into the First Century may eventually reveal the issues that *then* led to a schism in the Synagogue between Jews who could not accept Jesus as the Messiah and the Hebrew Nazarenes who acclaimed the Messiah's Coming. The fact is, however, in the paradox of history, that we have come a long way since that time. We are no longer the same peoples, exercised by the same issues. Think, for example, how important the observance of dietary laws

and circumcision were to the First Century Nazarenes. Yet, in our day, only a minority of Jews observe Kashrut and Reform Judaism accepts a male convert without requiring circumcision.

Nevertheless, we identify ourselves with the historic experiences of our people's past. We remember those experiences through rite and ritual; and through religious teaching and practice we communicate the values derived from our encounter with history to the oncoming generation. Thus Elijah's Cup symbolizes the Jews' hope for man's future redemption, even as the empty cross depicts that concept for the Christians. The Torah Scroll is rendered homage as a sign of God's Word in our midst, even as Christians pay respect to the open Bible at their altar. Matzoh, the bread of affliction, recalls our suffering and bids us seek a world of justice, and Christians place ashes upon their foreheads and drink the Communion wine recalling the atoning sacrifice of Jesus and the Christian's duty to translate His suffering and death into compassion for fellow men.

But these *sancta*, the symbols by which we affirm and incorporate our beliefs, contain more than ideas systematically described in theology courses. They touch our depths. They become part of our self-identity. They link us to our people's past and renew our faith in its future role in man's redemption.

We remain loyal to our group, therefore, not because it is superior to another, but rather because it is part of ourselves. Through such affiliation we describe ourselves. We take our values predominantly from our own religion; we find ourselves at home in the rites and ceremonies in which we have been nurtured and through whom we experience God's Presence. Our religion is precious to us.

Because each religious group has had different experiences in history, because we symbolize our values through different rites and ceremonies—we are different.

Certainly we differ in our symbol system. This is what makes shared liturgy so difficult. In order for Jews and Christians to pray together, we must either create a service unique to neither or else temporarily suspend belief.

As to the substance of our value systems, a description of normative beliefs awaits the specificity of time and place and subject matter. For example, in many ways I find myself closer in values on

some issues to Christian liberals than to Orthodox Jews; or closer in attitudes to conservative Christians than to liberal Jews. And always I am mindful that I am a Jew, not a Christian; I am a human being suffering human limitation, inadequacy, guilt, and unredeemedness with other humans whatever their religion.

It is exactly such a sophisticated, deep-down under, historic review of our experiences and our beliefs, our dogmas and our doubts that can enrich the interreligious dialogue. Through such theological conversation we not only illumine our own value systems; we also discover that in our neighbor which makes him a brother and yet different. So the dialogue becomes a means of knowing the mystery of God's actions in history in a profounder way.

Questions for Discussion

1. At what point in American history and for what reasons was it important for Jews and Christians to emphasize the values we share together?
2. Why is it important now to acknowledge and face squarely our religious and political differences? How did the NCCJ try to help religious groups in America bring their conflicts into the dialogue? What other factors in America, within Jewish and Christian life, and on the world scene, made such frank conversations required and possible?
3. In what ways are problems of church and state relations similar in both Israel and America? In what ways are they different?
4. What has been Judaism's contribution to civilization? What has been Christianity's contribution to civilization?
5. Can you cite from your own experiences efforts made to compare religions that led to stereotyping or denigrating contrast? Can you cite more wholesome efforts at religious comparison?
6. On what basic values do you think Jews and Christians agree and disagree? What differences between Jews and Christians do you believe to be "normative"?
7. What do you think of the author's view that Jews and Christians would do well to view skeptically the sharp contrasts usually made between Judaism and Christianity?

8. Do you think it still true that most people derive their values from their religions or that our differing symbol systems are crucial in communicating religious beliefs? If not, where then do people derive their values and of what significance are our religions?
9. Do you find yourself sometimes closer in belief and attitude toward a member of another religion than toward some members of your own religious community? Explain.
10. Why does Rabbi Gilbert believe joint prayer across religious lines to be so difficult? What has been your experience?
11. How can dialogue enable us "to know the mystery of God's actions in history" in a profounder way?

SESSION FOUR: Anti-Semitism and the New Testament

In an effort to delineate those differences between Jews and Christians that once caused tension and may still influence our relationship, and in the effort to probe the religious sources of anti-Semitism, many Jews turn first to the New Testament. The harsh passages in the New Testament, they allege, record the beginnings of Jewish-Christian antagonism. In these passages the most painful aspects of our religious differences are exposed. Indeed, some Jews believe that anti-Semitism will never be eradicated from Western civilization so long as the New Testament, unedited and uncensored, remains the Holy Scriptures for Christians.

The claim of these Jews is given some credence, undoubtedly, by the fact that there still are to be found many Christians who use New Testament passages, unreservedly, to assert concepts of Christian chosenness and superiority (as a corollary of Jewish displacement in God's plan). There are still to be found some Christians who see in the New Testament verification for their convictions that Jews are an accursed, rejected and deicide people. They regard the synagogue as having been displaced by the New Israel as God's "Sacrament for Salvation." It is important, therefore, that we focus attention on the New Testament.

Despite sharp Jewish objection to such readings of the New Testament as I have outlined, Jews cannot expect Christians to give up their scripture. Nor can we expect Christians to delete any "objectionable passages," to abridge or censor their Holy Writ—any more than we would censor or delete passages from our Hebrew Scriptures. No Jew would dare excise the bloody accounts of Joshua's slaughter of whole villages, or the practice of trial by ordeal, or the cry for vengeance in the Psalms—the smashing of the heads of enemy children against the walls—even though such passages today shake our sensibilities.

Those who are cognizant of post-biblical rabbinic commentaries know that the sting has been removed from such passages. Through the

reading of Scripture with rabbinic explanations, Rashi's interpolations and the more recent observations of contemporary authorities, we Jews can trace the development of spiritual and moral insight within our religion.

It is exactly through such sensitive updating of the notes and commentaries that accompany the New Testament that the Christian teacher can, and very frequently does, overcome the seeming harshness of many passages. We cannot expect Christians to repudiate their Scriptures, but we can indeed hope that Christian scholars will apply critical methods to their Scriptural studies. By interpreting the passages in their historic context and in the light of the totality of Christian teachings, they can remove the pangs of enmity such passages still sometimes provoke.

Jews should become aware that exactly such a concern has already become part of the instruction of Christian scholars and seminarians. Also, Christian scholars have recently urged that the Greek New Testament passages be re-translated, such as the inexact and misleading characterizations of "Jews" in the Gospel of John as the corporate enemies of Jesus. Such re-translations will render the text so as to reflect more accurately the historical circumstances of the period when Jesus lived. Not "the Jews" as such, but "some Judeans," "officers of the High Priest," certain leaders, and corrupt officials were involved in enmity toward Jesus. Surely, the people who defended Jesus, who spoke well of him, who said "No man can do these things except he be sent from God," were Jews also. Such more specific renderings of the text is not censorship, tampering with the text, or repudiating what the New Testament says, but rendering the text faithfully in accordance with the realities of biblical and modern history and the context of the events themselves.

Jews should also be aware that Christian biblical scholars are increasingly stressing the fact that Hebrew Scriptures have a value in their own right. Whereas in the past, Christians read Hebrew Scriptures as though they were but a foreshadowing of truth fulfilled in Jesus, now many underscore the point that an understanding of Hebrew Scriptures is necessary in order properly to understand the New Testament. Instead of merely speaking of the necessity of reading the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, it is now increasingly being emphasized that the Hebrew Scriptures were the sole scriptures of the

New Testament church, and that it is normative "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." (II Tim. 3:16 RSV)

Yet what Christians see in some passages are not necessarily the meanings Jews see. When Isaiah spoke of a child born of a young woman (most Christians read "virgin"), Jews, and many Christians as well, believe that he was not speaking of Jesus. When the Psalmist cried out, "Lord. O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me!" he had no vision of Jesus on the cross. When Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant, he did not mean the New Testament. There are Christian scholars today who realize, with Jews, that these passages speak God's word to the Hebrew people in their time. Yet, some evangelical Christian scholars still insist that these passages must be understood in a "multiple sense,"—that is, they are spoken as God's Word to the situation existing in that day (the contemporary dimension) and they speak also of events in the future (the predictive dimension). But whether the prophets speak to their own time, and are still predicting some future event, to these scholars they are words also spoken to the contemporary Christian as "teaching, for reproof, etc.," as Paul said to Timothy. There is a variety of Christian views as to what the Jewish Bible teaches.

But the crucial point is that both Jews and Christians must distinguish between the words and the intent the prophet had for his day, and the interpretations brought to these words in their Midrashic use as found in both the Talmud and New Testament writings. This is a field newly being explored, and we now turn to it.

The New Testament is a Jewish Book

The New Testament, after all, was a book written mainly by Jews for other Jews. The controversies, and the method of resolving those controversies, are Jewish. And if the New Testament seems to claim that Christianity is superior to the religion of the Pharisees and appears to contrast Jewish law unfavorably with Christian love, the truth is, notwithstanding, that the New Testament embodies as well that which was best in Rabbinic Judaism. Furthermore, Christianity cannot be understood without reference to Hebraic ideals, Rabbinic methods of biblical interpretation, the religious institutions, ceremonies and liturgy of ancient Palestine. The oft-assumed discontinuity of the two religions is only part of the story.

Jews and Christians were, then, in the first century, of the same household. And when members of a household quarrel, they sometimes allow themselves a liberty, a ferociousness with each other that would be intolerable if articulated by an outsider. Jesus never says anything about his fellow Jews harsher than that already to be found within the literature of Hebrew prophecy. To prove their ideas, Matthew and Paul used passages of Hebrew Scripture with no greater distortion than did the rabbis in the Midrash and Talmud who wished to score opposing points. Many Jews in that period, both Nazarenes and Pharisees, found it necessary to restate the old religion in response to new events, or to speak pertinently to the problems of a new day. To validate their insights and revisions, they often read back into Scripture that which may or may not have been there, or have cited proof texts out of context.

As long as the controversy between the followers of Jesus, the Nazarenes, and the Pharisees remained an internal Jewish quarrel, it was bitter but tolerable. Both took family liberties with each other. However, when Christianity moved out of Judaism and became the religion of Gentiles, the controversy became ominous and threatening. Now it was not Jew against Jew, but Jews against Christians, the Jewish claim against the Christian claim. The internal dispute became an external one, and Jews as well as early Christians suffered for this. Jewish-Christians were expelled both from the church and the synagogue. In this process of separation, Christians and Jews defined each other negatively. And even before Christianity gained the ascendancy in the West, the Jewish people were being spoken of as "Christ-rejectors" and considered agents of the devil and "a brood of vipers" against the Holy Church.

It is this regrettable polemic that has sown the seeds of pogrom and holocaust. Scholars must help to heal the wounds by rediscovering once again the Jewishness of the New Testament. They must help us recognize the Jewish world in which the events spoken of in Christian sacred writings occurred. This is precisely the work in which outstanding Christian scholars are now engaged. There is a wholesome challenge in this task for Jews as well.

For one thing, Jews must realize that the New Testament is much more than a record of a disputation between two groups within first-century Judaism. It is also more than a tool in the

modern Christian debate with Judaism. To a great degree we are still heirs to a style of German Higher Criticism that saw the New Testament completely as a rebuff of Old Testament ideas and to a Jewish literature that moved defensively to attack. Today we are more aware of the continuities. The Gospels contain a profound record of the prophetic-like ministry of Jesus. The New Testament articulates many Jewish insights with a beauty rare in literature. It is a powerful and edifying document. It ought not to remain a closed book.

Again, Jewish scholars are needed to demonstrate the numerous similarities between New Testament insights and the teachings of the rabbis in Midrash and Talmud. In many cases, we shall find that Christianity assumed a minority stance on values that remained, nevertheless, still Jewish if not normative. Parallels of these teachings can be found in rabbinic literature. When Paul suggests that baptism, rather than circumcision, may fulfill the requirements of conversion; or when Jesus opposes divorce (except possibly for adultery); when he counsels pacificism and teaches the sinfulness of lust in the heart; when he argues against harsh work restrictions on the Sabbath—they are raising distinctively Jewish issues. Parallel statements, howbeit not normative, were made by the rabbis and are to be found in the Jewish literature of that same period. Similarly, both Judaism and Christianity affirm God's fatherhood and man's brotherhood; both call upon their adherents to live lives marked by justice, compassion and purity; and both promise life eternal to the faithful.

Thus, despite their very real and serious differences, Jews and Christians in the first century did have a common heritage. To realize this mitigates the harsh tone we Jews find in the Gospel accounts. However, it becomes damaging, even ominous, when these same passages are read by today's Gentiles as eternal verities in an everlasting Jewish-Christian conflict. Instead, they should be seen as a quarrel in a particular time and place between two types of Jews. Neither the Nazarene Jews nor the more normative Jews were at that time compelled to recount that which bound them together against the pagan world, but that which separated them from each other. But bound together they were.

True, as a Jew today begins to study the New Testament, he may find strange some of the theological concepts in it, such as original sin,

virgin birth, resurrection and spiritual rebirth through faith. He may also find it difficult to understand how the typical Christian can so sharply contrast New Testament ethics with Jewish ethics. The Christian is apt to think of Jewish ethics as based on primitive values; he may sharply contrast the ethical ideals in the New Testament with the more primitive biblical values, such as vengeance, this-worldly punishment, corporate guilt, "an eye for an eye," which are to be found in Hebrew scriptures. The Jew, in turn, may be given to judging New Testament ethics as visionary and impractical. However, such misunderstanding and stereotyping are possible only if both Jews and Christians are unaware that the New Testament is contemporaneous, not with the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament in the Christian bible), but with Rabbinic Judaism.

Therefore, Jews and Christians can profit from a joint study of the New Testament, accompanied by Rabbinic commentary. Some segments of Judaism, in the days of Jesus, had developed theological insights and ideals not to be found in the *Tanach*, but to be found instead in the New Testament! And on the other hand, Jewish values were given more sophisticated articulation by rabbis and Pharisees whose writings are now recalled only in the Midrash. Extensive reading in first century literature will demonstrate that the continuity between the two faiths is rather large—obviously larger than is apparent from the usual simplistic reading of the New Testament.

From his reading of the New Testament, today's Jew will also discover that it contains a word that can inspire him, even as it has changed the lives of countless Christians. It can, for example, offer still a constructive testament to the problems of our civilization: "Make love your aim"; "What you do to the least of these you do unto me"; "Bear one another's burdens"; "Be imitators of God"; "Put to death . . . immorality, impurity . . . evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry"; "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all"; "Be doers of the word and not hearers only"; "Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith."

Would that all men lived by such sentiments!

Believing that Jews can profit from the study of the New Testament, and that Christians generally need the help Jews can give them to understand their "New" Testament, I joined without hesitation three Christian colleagues (one a Roman Catholic and

two Protestants) in collaborating on a commentary on the New Testament, even as they had earlier joined me in a commentary on the Hebrew Bible. Our efforts have been published as *The Bible Reader*.”¹¹

Through such biblical scholarship and joint study, Jew and Christian will discover how far both of us are removed from the quarrels of the early centuries of our common era and yet how much of the past remains a shared heritage.

Jews and Christians Are A Different People Today —A More Balanced View Is Required

History has changed us. The values we affirm today, our similarities and our differences, are shaped by a new world. We cannot easily stereotype the one or the other as we both have been content to do until now. Just as Christians may no longer hold the Jews or Romans corporately guilty for the crucifixion, so Jews must no longer hold all Christians and Christianity accountable for Jewish suffering. To be sure, Church legislation and Christian leadership victimized Jews. But it is also true that Jews survived, in part, because there were always some Christian leaders in some part of the world, for good or less altruistic reasons, who were ready to shelter Jews, provide them homes, or defend them against the bigotry of the age.

In the lachrymose accounts of most history books, we have, by naming them given an immortality to our enemies. But we have failed adequately to record the heroism of Christians who stood above prejudice and befriended Jews, often at their own peril. A more balanced view of history is needed. For example, during the Crusades some of the Christian leaders encouraged their soldiers to test their swords on the helpless captives of the Jewish ghettos. But others forbade such cruelty. During the Black Plague, some cities dispersed their Jews and burned and looted their homes, whereas in other communities, clergy rose to defend the rights of Jews and provide them haven and security. In some communities, priests and religious zealots led the pogrom against Jews and sought their forcible conversion—a policy frequently attacked by bishops, popes and church councils. On the other hand, frequently the harsh and restrictive legislation of a Pope or Church Council was ignored by more enlightened clergy and religious. No generalization can be made without invoking more sophisticated data.

These observations are not intended to heighten self-criticism, but rather to alert Jews that history is more complex than we are tempted to

characterize it. We have our Christian friends as well as our Christian enemies, and to acknowledge both is essential.

We must try, therefore, to understand this history ourselves, and at the same time to help Christians discover under what political, economic and social circumstances anti-Semitism becomes a powerful weapon. We must also ask, what is it in Christianity that enabled some Christians to transcend hatred and live their lives as good neighbors to Jews?

It is in this way that history must be taught, not only in the religious school, but also in the public school. We must learn of the economic and political pressures that lead men to mask their avarice in holiness, but we must also know that a true faith can be a life-changing barrier against bigotry. Christianity, indeed any religion, can become a force for good in our world or a reactionary source of evil. It is exactly such a knowledge of religion's complexity, its inter-relatedness to the secular world, and its potential for satanic misuse and constructive redemptiveness that must be explored.

The Problem of Jewish Prejudice Against Christians

Even as Christians will be required to discover the Church's complicity in anti-Semitism and the inadequacy of the Christian effort to overcome hatred, so we Jews must face up to our own fears and suspicions. There is also an anti-goyism among us. In our anger against real injustices we have permitted ourselves the luxury of a sense of righteous superiority. Often we had been victims of the Christian's apostasy from the gospel's call to love. Thus we frequently nursed our hurt in splendid isolation. Such self-ghettoization kept us from an awareness of what was going on in the Christian community, and deprived us of a fellowship with Christian friends that could be enriching. Our own aloofness has contributed to alienation, even as it has denied us the benefit of experiences that would help us to deal with the problems of our age.

For example, we have long been proud of a conceptual view of human sexuality which is superior by far to the puritanical repressive view of the body held among some Christians. In truth, however, some Jews also handled the problem of sex in a repressive manner despite a more liberal philosophic tradition of the unity of body and soul. In any event, sensitive Christians aware of the damage society has incurred from these teachings have long in-

itiated studies of sexual behavior. Their findings place them far beyond the Jewish community in an understanding of the new culture. We ought to be reading their books as we reevaluate our own religious legislation on masturbation, premarital sexuality, birth control, abortion, and homosexuality.

Similarly, Christians, as the religious majority in American society, have been the first to encounter such developments as Black demands for reparations. They have been compelled to confront the crises of their role in the inner city in a concrete way. Should they abandon church buildings for suburbia? How should they minister to the city? Should they experiment with new forms of ministry, store-front churches, teams of religious that include preachers, counselors, youth workers, worker-priests, candy-store proprietors, coffee-house churches, pastors to the hippies and the drug-addicted?

Similarly, Christians have long been conversant with the role of religious rites. What about the liturgy? Should it be translated into English? Should new prayers be written? Should guitars be used? How should the new music, psychedelic lights, dance, role-playing, discussion instead of sermon, encounter therapy, become part of the established prayer service?

In all of this, Christians have been seized by real problems, the struggle with which Jews ought to follow with sympathetic interest. We suffer from the same social problems and are now facing a Black-Jewish confrontation in our large urban areas over civil service, college entrance requirements, and the control of schools. In all this we have not yet adequately learned from the wisdom of Christian experimentation. We can learn both from its successes and failures, its temperateness and excesses.

There is much illiteracy in our ranks. There is some prejudice, distortion and confusion. We have little knowledge of Christian Scripture and church history. One Christian group appears like another to us. We do not know what makes a Catholic different from a Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, or Pentecostal Christian. We are unaware of change and disruption in the churches. If we are told that church teachings are changing, we point to Christian laity still frozen in their bigotry and ask, "But what about the grass roots?" If Christian laity supports Israel—as they indeed do—but the Pope fails to establish diplomatic relations with

the State, we say, "Yes, but what about the Pope?" and condemn Christian silence.

There is tragically still too much prejudice between Christian and Jew. Good seed frequently bears no fruit and ugly weeds mar the landscape.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think that the New Testament is a source of anti-Semitism in Western civilization? How do Christians today reinterpret what have been cited as "harsh passages" in the New Testament?
2. How did Christians use the Old Testament in the past? How are they beginning to use the Old Testament today? What issues still remain, therefore, for the interreligious dialogue on interpreting Hebrew Scripture?
3. Why do some Christians believe that a knowledge of the Old Testament is essential if the New Testament is to be understood properly?
4. In what way is the New Testament a Jewish book? When Christians look at the New Testament as a Jewish book, what differences does it make for interreligious dialogue? If Jews know the New Testament to be a Jewish book what differences ought that to make in our attitudes?
5. How did Jewish Nazarenes (who were also Jews) use the Midrashic method to justify opposing viewpoints?
6. Would you agree that Jews are unaware of what is happening in the Christian world? Are some Jews prejudiced against Christians?
7. In what way are the old quarrels no longer relevant for Jewish-Christian relations? What are the new problems we both face today?
8. Do Jews and Christians share together beliefs and values that might distinguish their responses to problems in the secular world?

SESSION FIVE: We Must Know Who We Are

Fortunately we are entering a period in America when such polarization, such prejudice, and such illiteracy of which we have just spoken is understood to be dangerous—dangerous in their consequences to the nation's social fabric, but more important, dangerous to the Jewish community. Therefore, efforts to bring dialogue into being is crucial.

But if dialogue is to succeed, we must know, ourselves, who we are and what we believe. Homework for the Jew requires, therefore, not only that he learns about Christians and Christianity but that he first knows Jews and Judaism. To be sure, there is a sense in which true dialogue helps the Jew to a more profound self-discovery.

The Problem of Israel and the Christian Response

To illustrate this deficiency, one need only recall the fact that Jews have been upset over the Christian response to the possibility of Israel's destruction at the hand of the Arab nations. We will use it as a case-in-point, since it demonstrates our particular need and the confused nature of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

There is some justification for Jewish concern over the Christian response. Christians have strong links to Arab missions. They have been raising money for 25 years for Arab refugees and deeply feel their plight. For some Christians, the establishment of the State of Israel runs counter to the way they read their scriptures. They may see, for example, an alleged scriptural curse placed upon Jews because of the Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Messiah; consequently, there followed the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersal of the Jews. Also, many Christians are devoted to peace among nations. They led the battle to extricate America from Vietnam. They support American foreign intervention only through the action of the United Nations. They cannot understand, therefore, why America should involve herself unilaterally in the Middle East. Except for evangelicals, most Christians look upon

Israel as merely another secular state; they have little understanding of its religious significance to Jews. And not a few liberal Christians, who comprehend our theological insistence that God's covenant with His people Israel includes the promise of a specific land, consider such a view a retrogressive retreat from the universalism and anti-Zionism of classic Reform Judaism. They quote the fifth article of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, in which the Reform rabbinate affirms:

We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the administration of the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

Those liberal Christians who define the Jews in this way oppose the State of Israel and feel strong kinship with The American Council for Judaism, which still adheres to this platform. Meanwhile, Reform Jews today reject article five of the Pittsburgh statement, and accept the 1937 Columbus Platform which supersedes it and which says, "In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of a renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life." Of course, most Jews, including Conservative and Orthodox Jews, have through the ages thus kept the land of Israel central in their faith.

But the truth is that most Christians, in America and throughout the western world and behind the Soviet Curtain, also favor Israel over the Arabs. They remain sentimentally attached to a Hebraic Jerusalem and hold to stereotypes about the Arab bedouins. Such attitudes may change as Fedayeen are pictured in the mass media as "liberators," and Israel is seen, no longer as little David against the Arab goliath, but rather as a professional, technologically competent military state. One is not certain, either, how the American population will respond to future developments in the Mid-East. But we should acknowledge the Christian support we get.

The further significant point is that Jews, themselves, are illiterate about the history of Zionism, the role of Israel in Jewish religion, the nature of Jewish peoplehood, the relations between Jews in Golah (the

dispersion) and Jews in Israel. Unable to define ourselves, how can we expect Christians to know how central is the land, the State of Israel, and the Zionist movement to our very definition of religion and Judaism's function in history?

Jews Are More Than A Religious Group

Another example of the importance of self-knowledge is illustrated by the fact that some Jews enter the dialogue as though they were merely another religious group. On this account, therefore, some Jewish leaders, in fact, quarrel over whether rabbis and religious organizations should foster the dialogue or, rather, whether there is a role for laity and Jewish secular "defense agencies." But the fact is that we are not a church. Jews are not like Christians. We are more than a religious group. We are a people. Not all of us define ourselves by a given set of creeds and dogmas. Rather, religion is the means by which we articulate, celebrate, and communicate those values the Jewish people have encountered in history, that provide meaning to our lives, and which we believe are crucial to human redemption.

Therefore, if we are to be intelligent participants in dialogue, we must know what it means to be a Jew. We must be able to define Jewish commitments, trace the development of distinctive Jewish values, accept and allow for the pluralism in Jewish values, accept and allow for the pluralism in Jewish forms of expression. Because Judaism is pluralistic, we must make a place in dialogue for adequate representation of all facets of Jewish life and thought.

Indeed, Jews have their own homework to do in preparation for dialogue. Only when that is done, when a Jew has reasonably answered for himself the question, "What is it that I, a Jew, believe and stand for?", can he enter creatively (creatively for himself and for the Christian partner) into dialogue. This self-definition is all the more vital now that Jews and Christians are sharing and clarifying their faith commitments.

There is no doubt that there is a mystery that surrounds a man's experience of God's presence in his life. It is not easy to talk about matters of faith, but I believe that we must try. When people love each other, they share with each other, as best they can, that which is most meaningful to them in their lives. There will be no love between Jews and Christians until we can engage in such com-

munication; or from another perspective, the sign of our love for each other will be the ease with which we can talk about religion—at all times respecting the integrity of the other. There can be no edification for either of us without an interreligious exchange.

In truth, the attempt to define oneself for the sake of another's understanding may lead to a new self-awareness and a profound faith. Without question, both Jews and Christians at this moment need to know more about each other's history, belief, and experience.

Furthermore, when we hear how God has dealt with the other, we may actually glimpse His presence and learn from His action in history. It is not insignificant that a stimulant to repentance for the Jew on Yom Kippur is to be found in the account of God's work among the Ninevites—His bringing them to reconciliation through Jonah's preachments.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you agree with the contention that dialogue with Christians necessitates that Jews know who they are and what they believe?
2. What is your response to Rabbi Gilbert's statement that Jews are "illiterate about the history of Zionism, the role of Israel in Jewish religion, the nature of Jewish peoplehood, the relations between Jews in Golah and Jews in Israel?"
3. How would you define "the Jews"? How would you define "Judaism"? What does it mean to you to be a Jew?
4. We cannot ever know what we are *completely*. How much do we need to know before entering dialogue?
5. Rabbi Gilbert says that Jews must know who they are before they enter into dialogue with Christians. But he also says that the Jewish-Christian dialogue contributes to our self-definition and self-understanding. Are these two statements contradictory, or are both assertions true?

FOOTNOTES

- 1 See author's article, "Jewish Resistance to Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Philadelphia, Vol. 4, no. 21967.
- 2 "The Jewish People in the Divine Plan of Salvation," *Thoughts*, Spring, 1966, pp. 31-32. See also Cardinal Bea's book, *The Church and the Jewish People*, Harper and Row, 1966.
- 3 News Bureau, Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, May 6, 1964.
- 4 See author's articles, "Lutherans and Jews," in *Reconstructionist*, New York, December 11, 1964; and "New Trends in the Protestant Mission to the Jew," *Conservative Judaism*, New York, Spring, 1965.
- 5 *A.D.L. Bulletin*, December, 1967.
- 6 Consult "The New Teachings of Protestants and Catholics With Regard to Jews," by the author, in *Encounter*, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Vol. 28, no. 1..
- 7 N.C. Features, Washington, D.C., *The Yardstick*, by Msgr. George Higgins, November 4, 1968.
- 8 See *The Ecumenist*, New Jersey, January-February, 1964.
- 9 Lubavitcher News Service, New York, March, 1965.
- 10 *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*, Hartford, Conn., April 16, 1965.
- 11 *The Bible Reader: An Interfaith Interpretation*, by Walter M. Abbott, S.J., Rabbi Arthur Gilbert, Rolfe Lanier Hunt, and J. Carter Swaim. New York, Bruce Publishing Co., 1969. With notes from Catholic, Protestant and Jewish traditions, and references to art, literature, history, and the social problems of modern man.

READING FOR DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING

(Note: Your local public or university libraries will carry most or some of these books. The Catholic and Protestant clergy can also assist you by recommending works they believe would be of value.)

Quaker Reader, ed. by Jessamyn West. New York, Viking Press, 1962. Paperback and hardcover.

The Protestant Dilemma, by Richard Lewis. Mountain View, Cal., Pacific Press, 1961. Paperback. (A Seventh-Day Christian argues for the joining of Law and Grace, and for the Sabbath)

The Methodist Bedside Book, compiled by Ralph Kirby. New York, David McKay, 1954.

Why I Am An Episcopalian, by John McGill Krumm. Boston, Beacon Press, 1957. Paperback.

Why I Am A Baptist, by Louie D. Newton. Boston, Beacon Press, 1965.

Why I Am A Presbyterian, by Park H. Miller. Boston, Beacon Press, 1965

Varieties of Protestantism, by John B. Cobb, Jr. Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1960. Hardback.

Protestant Christianity: Interpreted Through Its Development, by John Dillenberger and Claude Welch. New York, Scribner's, 1958. Paperback.

American Protestantism, by Winthrop S. Hudson. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1961. Hardback. (An historical interpretation).

Christianity in the United States, by Earle E. Cairns. Chicago, Moody Press, 1964. paperback. (An historical study of the problems of Protestant and Catholic pluralism)

Contemporary Protestant Thought, by C. J. Curtis. New York, Bruce Publishing Co., 1970. Hardcover. (A guide to theological systems).

The Fundamentalist Movement, by Louis Casper. Paris, Mouton, 1963. Hardcover. (Differentiates between "two kinds of fundamentalists").

The Protestant Faith, by George W. Forell. Engelwood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1960. (Describes the beliefs of "classical Protestantism.")

The Great Reversal: Evangelism vs. Social Concern, by David Moberg. Philadelphia, Holman (Lippincott), 1972. Hardcover. (An evangelical plea for social involvement).

The Unequal Yoke: Evangelical Christianity and Political Conservatism, by Richard V. Pierard. Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1971. (An evangelical critique of the conservative political bent of American evangelicals).

American Protestantism and Social Issues, 1919-1939, by Robert Moats Miller. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1958.

Christian Faith and Democracy, by Gregory Vlastos. New York, Association Press, 1938. Hardcover. (A good look at liberal theological rationale for social involvement in the 1930's).

A Gospel for the Social Awakening, by Walter Rauschenbusch. New York, Association Press, 1950. Hardcover. (Compilation of the teachings of the founder of "The Social Gospel").

The Christianity of Main Street, by Theodore O. Wedel. New York, Macmillan, 1950. Hardcover. (The way the Christian in the street sees and misperceives Christianity).

Modern Rivals to the Christian Faith, by Cornelius Loew. Philadelphia, Westminster, 1952. (How is the Christian faith to be distinguished from idolatry?)

- Understanding the Christian Faith*, by Georgia Harkness. Nashville, Abingdon, 1956. (A Methodist theologian sets forth what she thinks are the essentials of the Christian faith).
- The Roman Catholic Church*, by John L. McKenzie. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. Hardcover. (The structure, worship, beliefs and work of the Roman Church).
- The Emerging Layman*, by Donald J. Thorman. Garden City, Doubleday, 1962. (On eve of Vatican Council II a Catholic describes the role of the Catholic layman in America).
- The Catholic Avant-Garde, French Catholicism Since World War II*, by Jean-Marie Domenach and Robert de Montvalon. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967. (Thinkers whose theologies are influencing American Catholic thought, e.g. Teilhard de Chardin).
- Churches in North America*, by Gustav Weigel, S. J. Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1961. (A Catholic ecumenist describes the varieties of Christianity in the United States).
- What a Modern Catholic Believes About God*, by Fr. Andrew M. Greeley, Chicago, Thomas More Press, 1971. (A good interreligious dialogue resource).

APPENDIX

EXCERPTS FROM CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT DECLARATIONS DEALING WITH JEWS, AND PARTICULARLY THE THEOLOGICAL SOURCES OF ANTI-SEMITISM.

I. Declaration On the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: The Roman Catholic Church.

(Adopted by Vatican Council II and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965.)

1. In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship.

"One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.

"Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?"

"From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way

by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites.

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14,6), in whom men may find the fulness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men . . ."

2. "As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

"Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith—are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.

"The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "Theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9,4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

"As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews, in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues—such is the witness of the Apostle. In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3,9).

"Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

"True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if

this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

"Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

"Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the mountain from which every grace flows."

3. "We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4,8).

"No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

"The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2,12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven"

(For a full account of the Catholic deliberations on a Jewish statement see author's *The Vatican Council and the Jews*, World, 1967).

I. First Assembly of the World Council of Churches

(The World Council of Churches, in Amsterdam, Holland, August 22-September 4, 1948, commended to its affiliated churches for their serious consideration and action, a statement, "The Christian Approach to The Jews.")

"Before our churches can hope to fulfill the commission laid upon us by our Lord there are high barriers to be overcome. We speak here particularly of the barriers which we have too often helped to build and which we alone can remove.

"We must acknowledge in all humility that too often we have failed to manifest Christian love towards our Jewish neighbors, or even a resolute will for common social justice. We have failed to fight with all our strength the age-old disorder of man which anti-Semitism represents. The churches in the past have helped to foster an image of the Jews as the sole enemies of Christ, which has contributed to anti-Semitism in the secular world. In many lands virulent anti-Semitism still threatens and in other lands the Jews are subjected to many indignities.

"We call upon all the churches we represent to denounce anti-Semitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Anti-Semitism is a sin against God and man.

"Only as we give convincing evidence to our Jewish neighbors that we seek for them the common rights and dignities which God wills for His children, can we come to such a meeting with them as would make it possible to share with them the best which God has given us in Christ."

(The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, edited by W. A. Visser T. Hooft, New York, Harper, 1949, p. 161)

III. Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches

(The World Council of Churches, in New Delhi, India, November 19-December 5, 1961, adopted a "Resolution on Anti-Semitism." After recalling the last two paragraphs of the First Assembly resolution, the pronouncement recommends that Jews shall no longer be depicted as collectively guilty for the Crucifixion:)

"The Assembly renews this plea in view of the fact that situations continue to exist in which Jews are subject to discrimination and even persecution. The Assembly urges its

member churches to do all in their power to resist every form of anti-Semitism. In Christian teaching the historic events which led to the Crucifixion should not be so presented as to fasten upon the Jewish people of today the responsibilities which belong to our corporate humanity and not to one race or community. Jews were the first to accept Jesus and Jews were not the only ones who do not yet recognize him.

(The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1961, New York, Association press, 1962. p. 143)

IV. *The Logumkloster Consultation on "The Church and the Jewish People"*

(In 1964, the Department of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation, to which about 75 million Lutherans in various part of the world belong, called together theologians, pastors and mission specialists for a Consultation On The Church And The Jewish People in Logumkloster, Denmark. The participants adopted a series of statements representing a broad consensus.)

1. "The Church and Israel."

It asserts that those who share in the Christian inheritance "must recognize a grateful responsibility for the original heirs. It follows, therefore, that the Church will pray for the Jews daily, especially in its Sunday worship."

2. "Mission and Dialogue."

This statement declares that "the witness to the Jewish people is inherent in the content of the Gospel, and from the commission received from Christ, the Head of the Church," and recommends that it be "pursued in the normal activity of the Christian Congregation, which reflects itself in the Christian witness of the individual members." The document continues:

"It is a Christian responsibility to seek respectfully to understand both the Jewish people and their faith. Therefore, responsible conversations between Christians and Jews are to be desired and welcomed.

"Such conversations presuppose the existence of common ground on which Christians and Jews may meet, as well as points of difference. . . . The conversations do not assume an equating of the religions, nor do they require that Christians abstain from making their witness as a natural outgrowth of the discussions. Similarly Christians will listen gladly as Jews explain their insights of faith.

3. "The Church and Anti-Semitism".

"Anti-Semitism is an estrangement of man from his fellow-men. As such it stems from human prejudice and is a denial of the dignity and equality of men. But anti-Semitism is primarily a denial of the image of God in the Jew; it represents a demonic form of rebellion against the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and a rejection of Jesus the Jew, directed upon his people. 'Christian' anti-Semitism is spiritual suicide.

"This phenomenon presents a unique question to the Christian Church, especially in light of the long terrible history of Christian culpability for anti-Semitism. No Christian can exempt himself from involvement in this guilt. As Lutherans, we confess our own

peculiar guilt, and we lament with shame the responsibility which our Church and her people bear for this sin. We can only ask God's pardon and that of the Jewish people. "There is no ultimate defeat of anti-Semitism short of a return to the living God in the power of his grace and through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ our Lord. At the same time, we must pledge ourselves to work in concert with others at practical measures for overcoming manifestations of this evil within and without the Church and for reconciling Christians with Jews.

"Toward this end, we urge the Lutheran World Federation and its member Churches:

"a. To examine their publications for possible anti-Semitic references, and to remove and oppose false generalizations about Jews. Especially reprehensible are the notions that Jews, rather than all mankind, are responsible for the death of Jesus the Christ, and that God has for this reason rejected his covenant people. Such examination and reformation must also be directed to pastoral practice and preaching references. This is our simple duty under the commandment common to Jews and Christians: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.'

"b. To oppose and work to prevent all national and international manifestations of anti-Semitism, and in all our work acknowledge our great debt of gratitude to those Jewish people who have been instruments of the Holy Spirit in giving us the Old and New Testaments and in bringing into the world Jesus Christ our Lord.

"c. To call upon our congregations and people to know and to love their Jewish neighbors as themselves; to fight against discrimination and persecution of Jews in their communities; to develop mutual understanding; and to make common cause with the Jewish people in matters of spiritual and social concern, especially in fostering human rights."

V. *The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.*

(Adopted by the General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America on June 5, 1964.)

This "Resolution on Jewish-Christian Relations" which, "recognizing the ever-present danger of anti-Semitism," recalled the words of the First and Third Assemblies of the World Council of Churches (above quoted). It states, "We confess that sometimes as Christians we have given way to anti-Semitism. We have even used the events of the Crucifixion to condemn the Jewish people. . . . It urged its constituent communions to seek "true dialogue with the religious bodies of the Jewish community."

VI. *The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church*

(The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, at its 61st General Convention in St. Louis, adopted on October 22, 1964 a statement, "Deicide and the Jews.")

"The poison of anti-Semitism has causes of a political, national, psychological, social and economic nature. It has often sought religious justification in the events springing

from the crucifixion of Jesus. Anti-Semitism is a direct contradiction of Christian doctrine. Jesus was a Jew, and, since the Christian Church is rooted in Israel, spiritually we are Semites.

"The charge of deicide against the Jews is a tragic misunderstanding of the inner significance of the crucifixion. To be sure, Jesus was crucified by *some* soldiers at the instigation of *some* Jews. But, this cannot be construed as imputing corporate guilt to every Jew in Jesus' day, much less the Jewish people in subsequent generations. Simple justice alone proclaims the charge of a corporate or inherited curse on the Jewish people to be false.

"Furthermore, in the dimension of faith the Christian understands that all men are guilty of the death of Christ, for all have in some manner denied Him; and since the sins that crucified Christ were common human sins, the Christian knows, that he himself is guilty. But he rejoices in the words and spirit of his Lord who said for the Roman soldiers and for all responsible for His crucifixion, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do . . .'

VII. *The Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.*

(A statement was submitted to the executive committee of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. on April 15-16, 1971, and transmitted to the presidents of the three bodies participating in the cooperative agency — Lutheran Church of America, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and American Lutheran Church. The statement follows:)

SOME OBSERVATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN LUTHERANS AND JEWS

"Improved relationships among separated Christian churches in recent decades have also led to growing conversation between Jewish and Christian groups. We commend all endeavors which seek greater understanding, mutual confidence, elimination of tensions, and cooperation in the quest for justice and peace, and note statements issued by Lutheran groups which are helpful in these areas.

"Amid the pluralism of American society today and in the face of many practical problems facing Christians, Jews and all men of goodwill, it is especially necessary to foster and expand such conversations on more local levels, as a contribution to community understanding and cooperation, to heal wounds of the past, and to understand better our common heritage and common humanity. Today the mission of the church surely includes such conversations, and indeed must often begin with them. We urge Lutheran pastors, people and institutions to seek greater involvement in such endeavors.

"The Christian cannot fully understand what it means to be Jewish but our common ground in humanity and in the Hebrew Scriptures makes a base for beginning. In order to have authentic relationships there must be honesty, openness, frankness, and mutual respect along with a recognition of the real differences that exist and a willingness to risk confronting these differences.

"To these ends we offer some practical suggestions and make some observations as to methods so that conversations may be both honest and fruitful:

1. In localities where Lutherans are comparatively few in number, they are en-

- couraged to cooperate with other Christian groups in initiating and sustaining conversation with Jews.
2. Where Lutherans comprise a substantial group within a locality, they are encouraged to take the initiative in fostering conversation and community understanding.
 3. Meetings should be jointly planned so as to avoid any suspicion of proselytizing and to lessen the danger of offense through lack of sensitivity or accurate information about the other group.
 4. Because of the long history of alienation between the two groups, Christians and Jews should remember that one meeting does little more than set the stage for serious conversations. False hopes and superficial optimism by either group can lead to despair and further alienation.
 5. On both sides, living communities of faith and worship are involved. Because of fervent commitments emotions may run deep. It should be underscored that neither polemics nor conversions are the aim of such conversations, nor is false irenicism or mere surface agreement. There may remain honest differences, even as broad areas of agreement are discovered.
 6. If we have been open and have shared our assumptions, prejudices, traditions and convictions we may be able to share in realistic goal setting, especially in regard to further understanding and common cause in spiritual and social concerns such as fostering human rights.
 7. Different methods of procedure may be followed as mutually determined locally, such as:
 - a. Educational visits to advance mutual understanding of artistic, liturgical tradition.
 - b. Exchange visits at regular worship services, "open houses," and special celebrations, followed by explanation and discussion.
 - c. Informal small group discussions in homes in the manner of the "living-room dialogues." Participants may involve one synagogue and one congregation or neighborhood groups without regard to membership.
 - d. Week-end retreats with equal participation of members from both groups and equality of expertise.
 - e. Popular lectures, discussions, and demonstrations by well-informed resource persons. Lutherans might invite representatives of the American Jewish Committee, Jewish Chautauqua Society, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, National Conference of Christians and Jews, and Jewish theological schools.
 - f. Scholarly lectures and discussions by experts in biblical, historical and theological studies.
 8. Possible topics include: Our Common Heritage; The People of God and Covenant; Christian and Jewish Views of Man; The Significance of Hebrew Scriptures Today; Law, Righteousness and Justice; State of Israel; The Christian Church in Israel; Survey of the Attitudes and Teachings of the Church concerning Judaism; The Image of the Jew in Christian Literature; Luther and the Jews; The Meaning of Suffering; Can a Hebrew Christian be a Jew? An Israeli? Eschatology in Christian and Jewish Theology; The Significance of the Septuagint; The Universal God in an Age of Pluralism; The State and the Religious Community in Jewish and Lutheran Traditions; What Can We Do Together?
 9. Christians should make it clear that there is no biblical or theological basis for anti-Semitism. Supposed theological or biblical bases for anti-Semitism are to be examined and repudiated. Conscious or unconscious manifestations of discrimination are to be opposed."

VIII. *The Metropolitan New York Synod of the Lutheran Church in America.*

(The New York Synod adopted a statement on the writings of Martin Luther at its convention in September, 1971. Paul J. Krisch, Professor of Religious Studies at Wagner College, in the December 1971 (Metropolitan Synod) *Digest*, says:)

"What we did is (a) to repudiate the antisemitic writings of Dr. Martin Luther, (b) to admit that antisemitism exists 'among Christians' today and (c) to commit ourselves to 'repudiate and actively oppose every form of antisemitism . . .

"About our repudiating and combatting antisemitism: It is high time. This is the most positive element in the whole of our synod's action in these resolutions . . . The restitution and undoing of the offense against our brother must be commensurate with our offense against him and with the depth of our repentance."

IX. *Archdiocese of Cincinnati: Roman Catholic Church.*

(A document, issued on October, 1971, by the Sixth Synod, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, includes a section on Roman Catholic-Jewish relations.)

The Sixth Synod calls attention to the common heritage of Scripture and certain traditions among major families of faith and declares that "before a real bond of understanding can exist between Roman Catholics and Jews, the task of examining our shared history is mandatory." It declares that Catholics should attempt to understand the impact of the Nazi holocaust on Jews and also the depth of concern that most Jews feel for the State of Israel. It calls attention to "the 2000 years of vilification and persecution which have lain the burden of proving good faith on the Christian's shoulders" and called upon Roman Catholics "to abhor any manifestation of anti-Semitism, even as it may appear in our society today."

The Sixth Synod further cautioned Roman Catholics to remember the divergence of views among Jews, and outlined some differences among Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. It suggested that a committee on Roman Catholic-Jewish relations should always be part of the Archdiocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.

In sections devoted to dialogue, education, common prayer and community, the document outlined specific goals and recommendations. Under dialogue, it emphasized the need for "respect for the other as he is and esteem for his faith and religious convictions" and excluded the intent of conversion from dialogue. It recommended that all programs should be jointly planned and developed; and that planning a Catholic-Jewish dialogue should involve experts in theology, social organization and inter-personal skills; that Catholics should experience and understand Jewish holidays and that "open houses" between congregations and exchange visits of school-age children may be a means of promoting goodwill and understanding."

In the education section, the document cautions in particular:

1. "All who are responsible for instruction and education should be informed during their training about the permanent significance of the Jewish people in God's plan for mankind. The history of persecution should not be concealed and

- the Jewish people should not be treated as though they were non-existent.
2. "The Jewish people is not collectively guilty of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, nor of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. The Jewish people is not damned, nor bereft of its election. Their suffering, dispersion, and persecution are not punishments for the crucifixion or the rejection of Jesus.
 3. "Much care should be taken in instruction and homilies to right interpretations of biblical readings, especially of those texts which seem to put the Jewish people in an unfavorable light."

X. *The United Methodist Church.*

(A Statement on Interreligious Dialogue Between Jews and Christians. Adopted by The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, Atlanta, Ga., April, 1972.)

Common Roots

1. "The United Methodist Church understands itself to be a part of the People of God and specifically a part of the whole Christian Church, the Body of Christ. It also gives thanks for its roots in historic Judaism. It rejoices in the reciprocal patrimony of the Old and New Testaments.

"The heritage and hopes of an Israel in the context of which Jesus labored have continued to live in the Jewish faith and people. Christian awareness of indebtedness, however, to that history and its relationship to God is not as clear as it ought to be. Not only is the God we worship the same and many of our ethical concerns are held in common, but there are also numerous traditions in Israel's history whose impact upon and potential for the Christian Church were lost or are still undiscovered. Moreover, to be faithful to Jesus the Jew, the contemporary relationship of United Methodist Christians and those who worship as Jews should not be neglected.

"Appreciation for common roots should not blind us to the fundamental and inherently mutual theological problems to be faced. The relationship between the covenant of God with Israel and the covenant made in Jesus Christ and the understanding by Jew and Christian of each of these covenants merits exploration anew. Openness to the blessing of God on all covenanted people may lead to useful penetration of the intricacies of the interfaith discussions, if not to ultimate solutions. Serious new conversations need not and should not require either Jews or Christians to sacrifice their convictions. There is rich opportunity for potential growth in mutual understanding."

Service for Humanity

2. "At this moment in history, the potential of our common heritage is particularly important for the advancement of causes decisive for the survival of all mankind. While it is true that the concept of human brotherhood and solidarity is not represented by Jews or Christians alone, this concept has been central for both from their beginnings. The sacredness of persons as God's creation is expressed clearly in both the Old and New Testaments. The Biblical view of each human being as an intrinsic member of the community of persons forbids any suppression of groups through society at large and any manipulation of individuals as well. Nevertheless, Jews in particular have been victims of systematic oppression and injustice more

recurrently and more barbarously than have Christians. Therefore, in order to continue Jewish and Christian efforts for the common cause of mankind, it is not enough for contemporary Christians to be aware of our common origins. Christians must also become aware of that history in which they have deeply alienated the Jews. They are obligated to examine their own implicit and explicit responsibility for the discrimination against and for organized extermination of Jews, as in the recent past. The persecution by Christians of Jews throughout centuries calls for clear repentance and resolve to repudiate past injustice and to seek its elimination in the present. In provision of guidelines for action and in specific processes of reconciling action for all men there is an opportunity now to join hands with Jews in common cause for a human community.

"For Jew and Christian alike, God is active in history. The political and social orders are not free from his judgment. Dialogue which does not blink at differences of assumptions and interpretations of Scripture and faith, but which accentuates the fundamental agreement for the sake of service to society can be, in the Providence of God, a timely and fruitful interreligious adventure."

Exploring Together

3. "In many areas of spiritual and intellectual concern the past relationship of Jews and Christians has been vitiated by inadequate communication. We have talked past one another instead of with each other. In new conversations there is an important opportunity to move past the polemical use of scripture and to explore how and why past conditioning keeps us apart, while we have much in common. In such dialogues, an aim of religious or political conversion, or of proselytizing, cannot be condoned.

"To commend the love of God in Jesus Christ through saving word and serving work is an ingredient of dialogue for Christians, but anti-Semitism (against Jew or Arab) represents a denial of the love we proclaim and compromises our service of justice. Fruitful discussions should proceed with the clear acknowledgment that there is no valid biblical or theological basis for anti-Semitism. Prejudice and discrimination on racial grounds are not valid expressions of Christian faith. Why people still violate their unity given in God, and in his creation and redemption, should be examined in company with our Jewish brothers and sisters."

Responsibility in Problem Areas

4. "Dialogues presently are complicated by problems of scriptural interpretation, conditioned attitudes, and turbulent political struggles such as the search for Jewish and Arab security and dignity in the Middle East. Facing these difficulties together may lead to creative results. In this process, we are obligated to respect the right of the Jews, as of all religious groups, to interpret their own scriptures with regard to their peoplehood and destiny. When rival political positions each claim scriptural warrant, however, the issues no longer are related simply to religious freedom for one or another but to the political issue of how resources may be distributed justly. In Jewish-Christian dialogues is placed a responsibility for being concerned for the implications there for peace and justice for all persons.

"The Christian obligation to those who survived the Nazi Holocaust, the understanding of the relationship of land and peoplehood, and the conviction that God loves all persons, suggest that a new dimension in dialogue with Jews is needed. A new perspective for Christians is a prerequisite for the reduction of mutual ignorance and distrust."

Guidelines for Conversations

5. "The principles which have been outlined above implicitly or explicitly suggest some practical guidelines which can instruct conversations in local communities and at other points of interaction. An incomplete list of the more important considerations is attempted here.

"a. Wherever possible, conversations with members of Jewish communities should be initiated and maintained through an existing or an ad hoc ecumenical framework. The ecumenical body could begin by accepting the principles in this United Methodist statement as a foundation for the dialogue, or by drafting its own.

"b. In the absence of cooperative Christian efforts to explore mutual understanding, tensions and difficulties, United Methodist initiative (or response to Jewish initiative) is to be encouraged.

"c. Christian participants should make clear that they do not justify past injustice done by Christians to Jews and that there is no tenable biblical or theological base for anti-Semitism, and that they themselves wish to be free of it.

"d. Joint planning of conversations should emphasize the broad purposes of dialogues and lessen suspicion that conversion is a deliberate intention.

"e. Honest differences should be expected and probed seriously, even as areas of agreement and mutual support are discovered.

"f. A series of meetings with some guarantee of continuity of participants is necessary for fruitful conversation. False hopes and superficial optimism resulting from a single session together can lead to despair and further alienation.

"g. The joint study of that part of our tradition which both groups have in common, the Jewish Bible or the Christian Old Testament, can be of paramount importance. It is here that the foundation of Jewish and Christian existence coincide. A joint study has potential for new insight into our mutual relationship and our togetherness.

"h. Conversations which begin with exploration of scriptural and traditional heritages may move to political and sociological and economic investigations and might well result in common action in the causes of human rights.

"i. The dialogues should not overlook the rich opportunities afforded in visitation of synagogues and churches and in common prayer and other interreligious services."

Declaration of Intent

6. "No one can foresee with absolute clarity the shape of the future. Openness to dialogue with other major religions of the world is not excluded for the future, but a bond of understanding and peace between Jew and Christian surely is one key ingredient of a viable community of persons. In both theological and practical issues of the moment there are offered challenges and opportunities for growth.

"A reduction of Jewish or Christian beliefs to a tepid lowest common denominator of hardly distinguishable culture religions is not sought in this process. A new confrontation of our common roots of our common potential for service to humanity, with the benefits from mutual explorations, and with the knotty contemporary problems of world peace commends itself to us. Thus, it is the desire of The United Methodist Church honestly and persistently to participate in conversations with Jews. Our intent includes commitment to their intrinsic worth and import for society. It includes as well the Christian hope that the "oneness given in Jesus Christ" may become an example of hope for the oneness of humanity. Within this framework and in acknowledgment of the common Fatherhood of God, on all oc-

casions for this new interreligious adventure The United Methodist Church seeks to be responsive."

DECLARATIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

(Adopted by the General Conference, The United Methodist Church, Atlanta, Ga., April, 1972.)

"Religious persecution has been common in the history of civilization. We urge policies and practices that insure the right of every religious group to exercise its faith free from legal, political, or economic restrictions. In particular, we condemn anti-Semitism in both its overt and covert forms, and assert the right of all religions and their adherents to freedom from legal, economic, and social discrimination."

FORMATION OF MANDATORY ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONFERENCE COMMISSIONS

(Resolution No. 166 of the Committee on Ecumenical Affairs, Report No. 9, "makes mandatory" the formation of "Conference Commissions on Ecumenical and Interreligious Concerns." Adopted by the General Conference April, 1972, at Atlanta, Ga.)

"To stimulate understanding and conversations with all Christian bodies, to encourage continuing dialogue with Jewish faith communities, and to encourage an openness of mind toward and an understanding of other major world religions.

"To stimulate conference, district and congregational participation in councils, conferences, or federations of churches, in interfaith studies and in the use of jointly approved curriculum resources."

XI. *Southern Baptist Convention.*

(A resolution on anti-Semitism, adopted at the North Carolina State Baptist Convention in Charlotte, N.C., on November 24, 1971, was followed by a similar resolution passed by the Southern Baptist Convention in Philadelphia on June 7, 1972.)

ON ANTI-SEMITISM

"WHEREAS, Anti-Semitism has been a serious problem for the Church through most of Christian history, and

"WHEREAS, This unchristian attitude on the part of many peoples led to brutal persecution of the Jews in numerous countries and societies, and

"WHEREAS, the most flagrant and cruel expression of this spiritual malignancy, the Nazi holocaust, transpired in our generation, and

"WHEREAS, Latent Anti-Semitism lies barely under the surface in many western, Christian culture today, and

"WHEREAS, Many Christian communions and denominations, including our own, have failed to take a sufficiently vigorous stand against anti-Semitism, and

"WHEREAS, It is clearly a moral and ethical question of the greatest magnitude, and

"WHEREAS, Baptists share with Jews a heritage of persecution and suffering for conscience sake,

"Therefore, be it *Resolved* that this Convention go on record as opposed to any and all forms of anti-Semitism; that it declare anti-Semitism unchristian; that we messengers to this convention pledge ourselves to combat anti-Semitism in every honorable, Christian way.

"Be it further *Resolved*, that Southern Baptists covenant to work positively to replace all anti-Semitic bias with the Christian attitude and practice of love for Jews, who along with all other men, are equally beloved of God."

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